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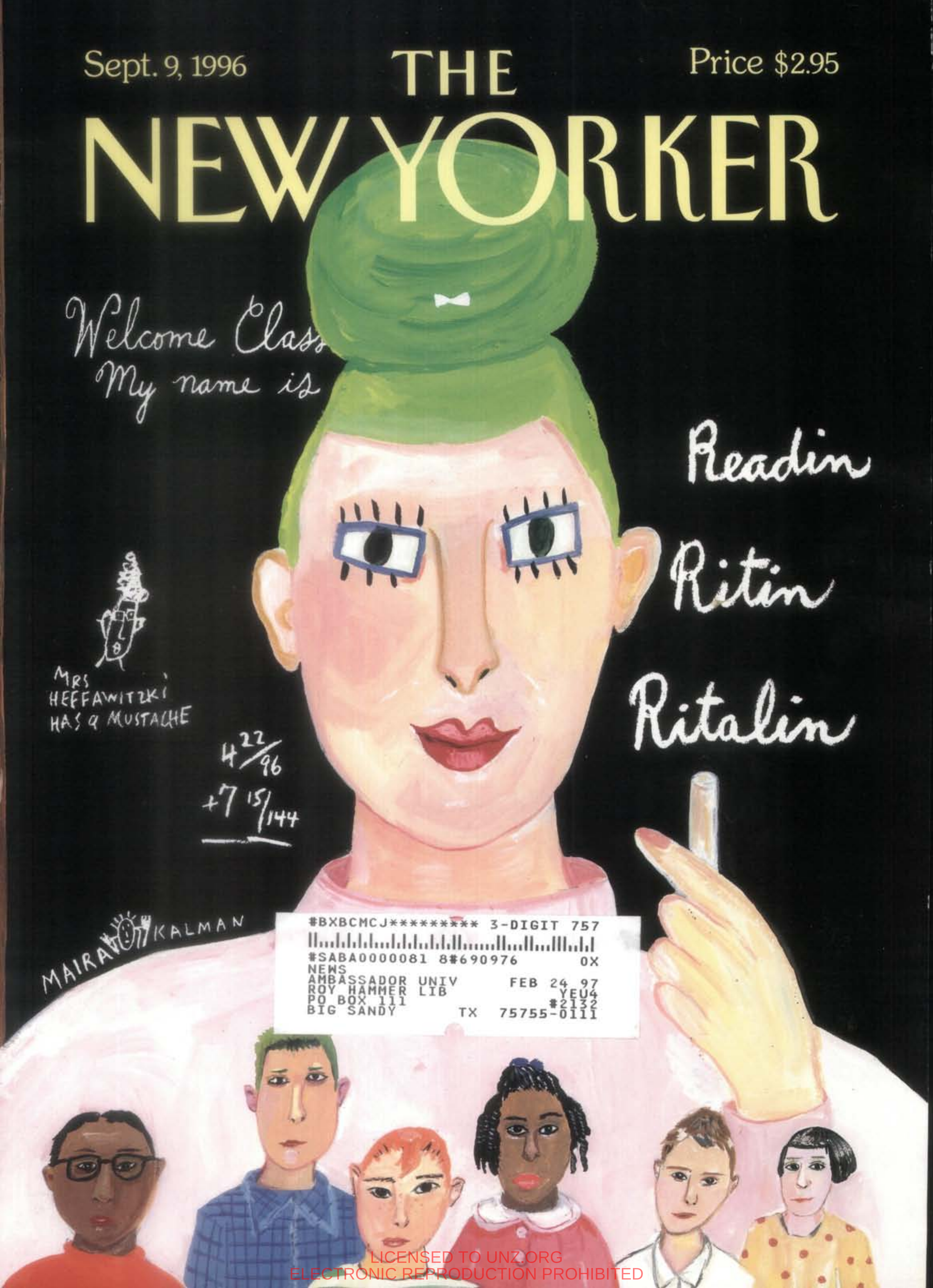
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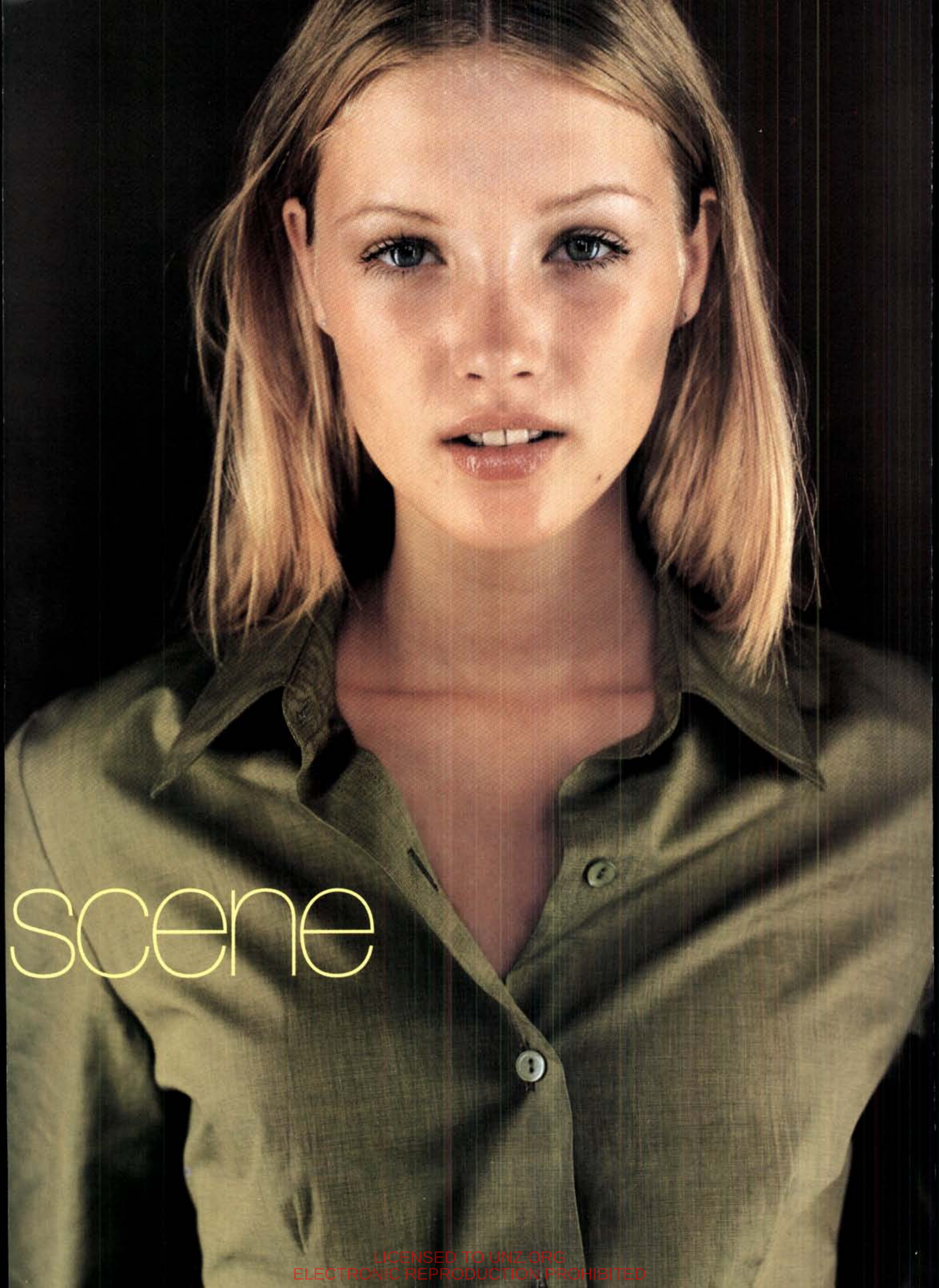

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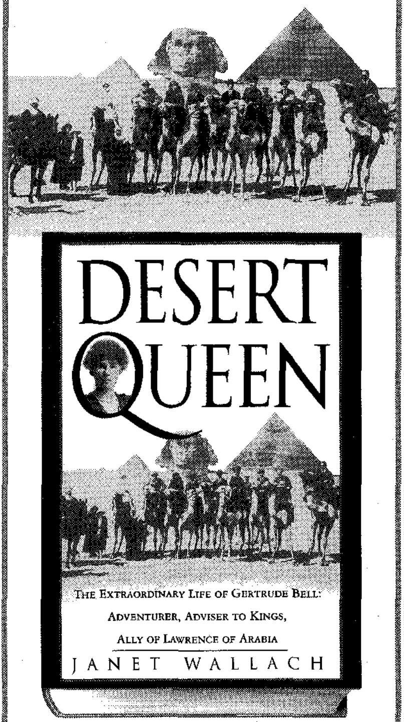
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THE NEW YORKER

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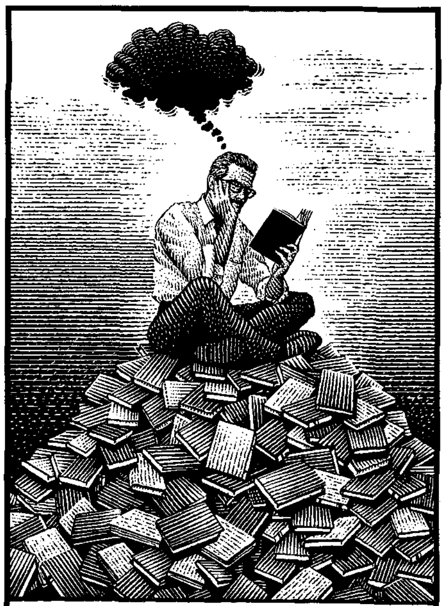

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COMMENT

BIG TALK

It's about addressing the mainstream.

So many words! At the national political conventions just completed, a couple of hundred thousand of them issued from the podiums—and that was on top of millions more poured forth at caucus meetings, delegation meetings, press conferences, and panel discussions, and into the microphones of an immense journalistic horde. Cascades of words, cataracts of words, great rolling tsunamis of words—all spoken for the purpose not of enlightening or entertaining, or even tricking, the public but of persuading it, by any verbal means necessary (including enlightenment, entertainment, and trickery, if that's what it takes), to vote the right way come November.

So little meaning! For when the object of the game is to sway the emotions of the largest possible masses of people vagueness is a precision tool. Politicians are not essayists; their purpose is not to make themselves clear but to make themselves, and their ideas, acceptable to a fleeting majority. The more precise a formulation is, the more it invites disagreement. If the essayist is a sculptor, chipping away at each thought until its significance is exact and unmistakable, the politician is a truck driver, hauling as much raw granite as his vehicle will hold. Both follow honorable trades, but each of them bears watching by the other.

In the verbal war for political domination, the big guns are the focus-group-tested "themes"—the Republicans' "Restoring the American Dream," the Democrats' "Putting Families First," the endlessly repeated references to values, strength, community, opportunity, diversity, work, responsibility, and the like. As Michael Kelly reports elsewhere in this issue, the parties invest enormous quantities of energy, ingenuity, and money in trying to create associations in the public mind between themselves and feel-good bromides of this kind. But there's some small-calibre ordnance lying around, too.

For example, the minute Bob Dole selected Jack Kemp as his running mate, a drumbeat went up from operatives of the Clinton campaign. Senator Christopher Dodd, the Democratic Party's general chairman, immediately went around describing Kemp's views as "totally out of the mainstream." George Stephanopoulos, a senior adviser to the President, added, "His economic ideas, while interesting, are certainly outside the mainstream, and in some cases even flaky." And deputy campaign manager Ann Lewis, speaking of Kemp's hard line on abortion, chimed in, "Let us be clear: that is an extreme position. That is not in the mainstream." The chorus continued right

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through the Democratic Convention, and it shows no signs of letting up.

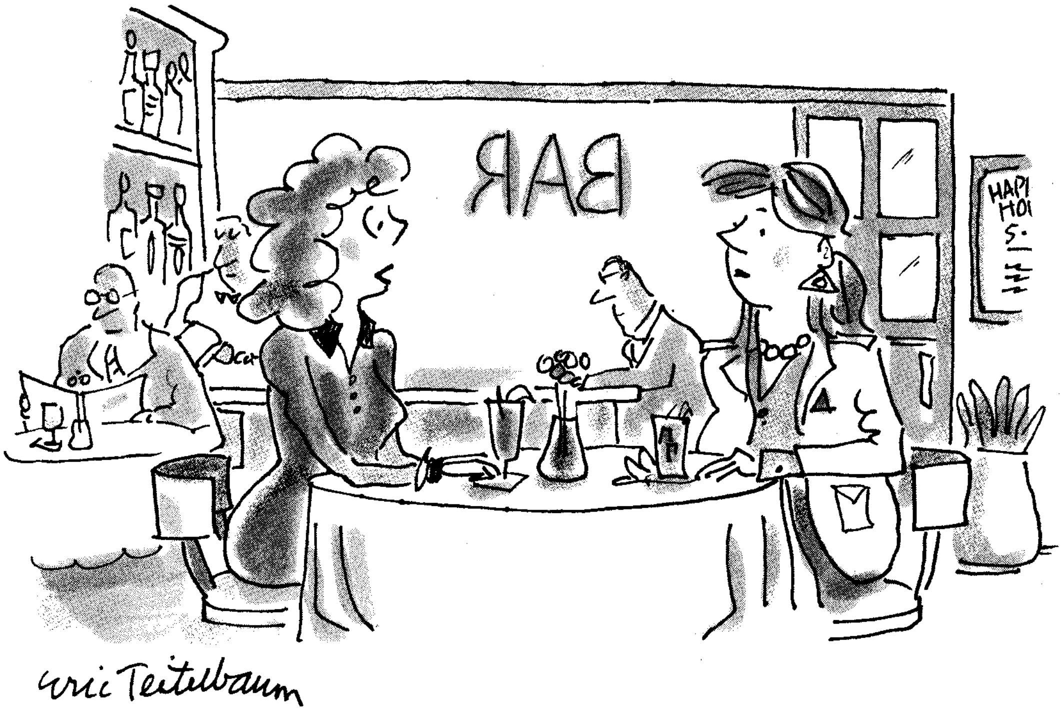
It's not true, of course. Kemp's views may indeed be flaky (as is, arguably, his attachment to the gold standard). They may even be extreme (as is, certainly, his support for a constitutional amendment that would criminalize abortion in all instances). But, by definition, the long-held, well-known views of a major-party candidate for national office cannot be outside the mainstream. Beyond that, though, this sanctification of the mainstream as a political Ganges, a sacred river whose waters cleanse all impurities, is a thoroughly bad business. Mainstream-mongering suggests that the test of an idea is not logic, reason, or merit but conventionality. It implies that an unpopular, or even an unfamiliar, idea is per se a bad idea. Yet the list of ideas that were good many years before they were mainstream is a long and distinguished one; it includes abolitionism, woman suffrage, social security, child-labor laws, and the income tax. Without tributaries, after all, the mainstream dries up.

The season's most noticeable vogue word, however, is an innocent-sounding preposition. Having been thoroughly tested by the advertising and fashion industries, "about" has now become the new universal solvent of political language. Everything is about something, and, by contrast, is not about something else. The Republican Party is about inclusion. The Democratic Party is about working families. The Reform Party is about—or not about—Ross Perot. The beauty of "about" is that it suggests some sort of causal or programmatic relationship without having to specify one. "About" represents a technological leap over its predecessor, the verb "to address." Addressing problems long ago became the rhetorical substitute for solving them. But "addressing" calls a little too much attention to its own cluelessness. If "addressing" is a vacuum tube, the far speedier and more versatile "about" is a silicon chip.

The country's leading aboutnik, of course, is Bob ("That's what Bob Dole's all about") Dole. Yet the Republican nominee's acceptance speech in San Diego contained not a single instance of that invidious usage. More remarkably, it contained scarcely a single cliché, even in the pedestrian—and occasionally (such as an attack on United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for having a foreign-sounding name) vulgar—passages that had obviously been shoehorned into the original draft, which, as was widely reported, was the work of the novelist Mark Helprin. Dole offered little of the usual vacant blather about "dreams," especially "the American dream," which the Republicans are "about" "restoring." On the contrary, Dole won the hearts of at least a few skeptical listeners by declaring that "facts are better than dreams," thus trashing the whole carefully devised theme of the Convention. The speech was a beautifully written exercise in old-fashioned rhetoric—so old-fashioned that it owed more to Pericles than to, say, Daniel Webster. In simple, elevated, rather archaic language, Dole embraced "God, family, honor, duty, country," and expressed a dignified contempt for money: "The triumph of this nation lies not in its material wealth but in courage, sacrifice, and honor."

Fine words, but the virtues they praise are martial, civic, public virtues. The great flaw in the speech was the absence of any connection between those virtues and the program they supposedly require: a huge, unfinanced tax cut skewed to the already well-off. Yes, Dole's was a wonderful speech, but its formal style was so remote from the candidate's usual way of talking, and its charm so much a result of its literary qualities, that one is hard put to imagine how it can endure and be replicated on the stump. What's more likely to endure in the public mind is the program: that great big tax cut, which Dole argued would simultaneously spur people to work harder and allow them more time to spend at home with their families—a neat trick, but perfectly manageable, no doubt, in the supply-side fantasy world Dole has chosen to enter, where cutting taxes raises revenues.

President Clinton, in accepting renomination two weeks later in Chicago, used up his opponent's allotment of clichés as well as his own. The President's speech was interminable and uninspiring. Its try for the vision thing, "a bridge to the future," was lifted directly from Dole's far more eloquent paean to the past: "Let me be the bridge to an America that only the unknowing call myth." But Clinton's lengthy list of modest, practical, specific proposals—here a community-development bank and a bit of gun control, there a flextime law and an extra day in the hospital—is truer to his tinkerer's heart, and is probably more in tune with a public made wary of big promises and big plans. In any case, all was back to normal the next day. "It's about America," Dole told his first post-Convention rally. "It's about America's children. It's about the future." —HENDRIK HERTZBERG



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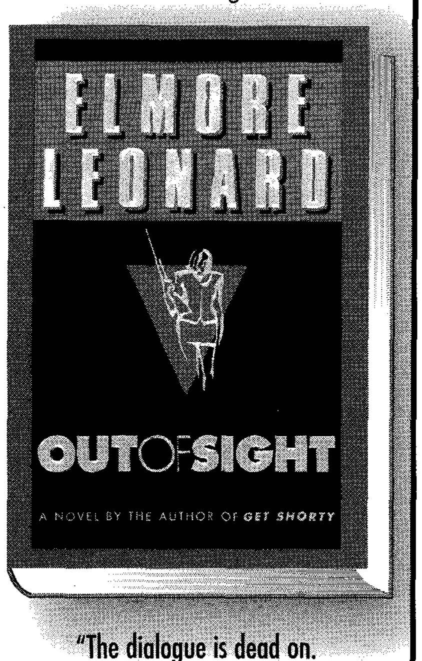

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IN THE MAIL

OUR POLITICAL PAST

Monica Crowley's stomach-churning account of Richard Nixon's lingering bitterness ("Nixon Unplugged," July 29th) confirms Nixon's refusal to recognize the part he played in destroying public respect for the Presidency. For him to speak of Bill Clinton's election as proof that "this country has finally gone to hell" without acknowledging his own role as Charon was sadly typical. Had he not treated his office with such undignified cynicism, surely no man of Clinton's moral stature could have been elected in 1992.

Tim Geary
New York City

Despite the revisionism that followed Richard Nixon's death, let us not forget that his career featured such discreditable actions as shamelessly smearing his opponents, hanging on to Joe McCarthy's coattails for dear life, crying sour grapes each time he lost an election, and treating the Constitution like a floor mat in his efforts to wreak vengeance on his real and imagined enemies. But Ms. Crowley doesn't find it the least bit ironic or hypocritical when Nixon tut-tuts over Clinton's philanderings and political ethics. To my mind, political journalism requires a certain amount of critical thinking, not merely holding an old man's hand and massaging his ego.

Dave Margolis
West Hollywood, Calif.

OUR POLITICAL FUTURE?

Alan Brinkley's Comment on third parties (July 29th) explains how "winner-takes-all" elections inevitably lead to a political duopoly but misses the implications this has for political reform. Duopolies in turn lead to the elevation of political gamesmanship over issues of governance. Like match races between sailboats, elections between two parties encourage the competitors to focus on short-term tactical advantages and to disregard all but the more extreme shifts in the larger context in which their race is taking place. Add even one more viable competitor, however, and the winning strategy changes to accurately reading and then responding to the demands of the over-all long-term situation. Such fashionable political reforms as campaign-finance laws, term limits, free television time for candidates, and disclosure laws for lobbyists will not alter the match-race mentality of the two major parties. Only the sustained corrective force of viable third—to say nothing of fourth or fifth—parties can significantly alter this country's political dynamics, and only a systemic change away from winner-takes-all elections to proportional representation can insure the viability of multiple political parties.

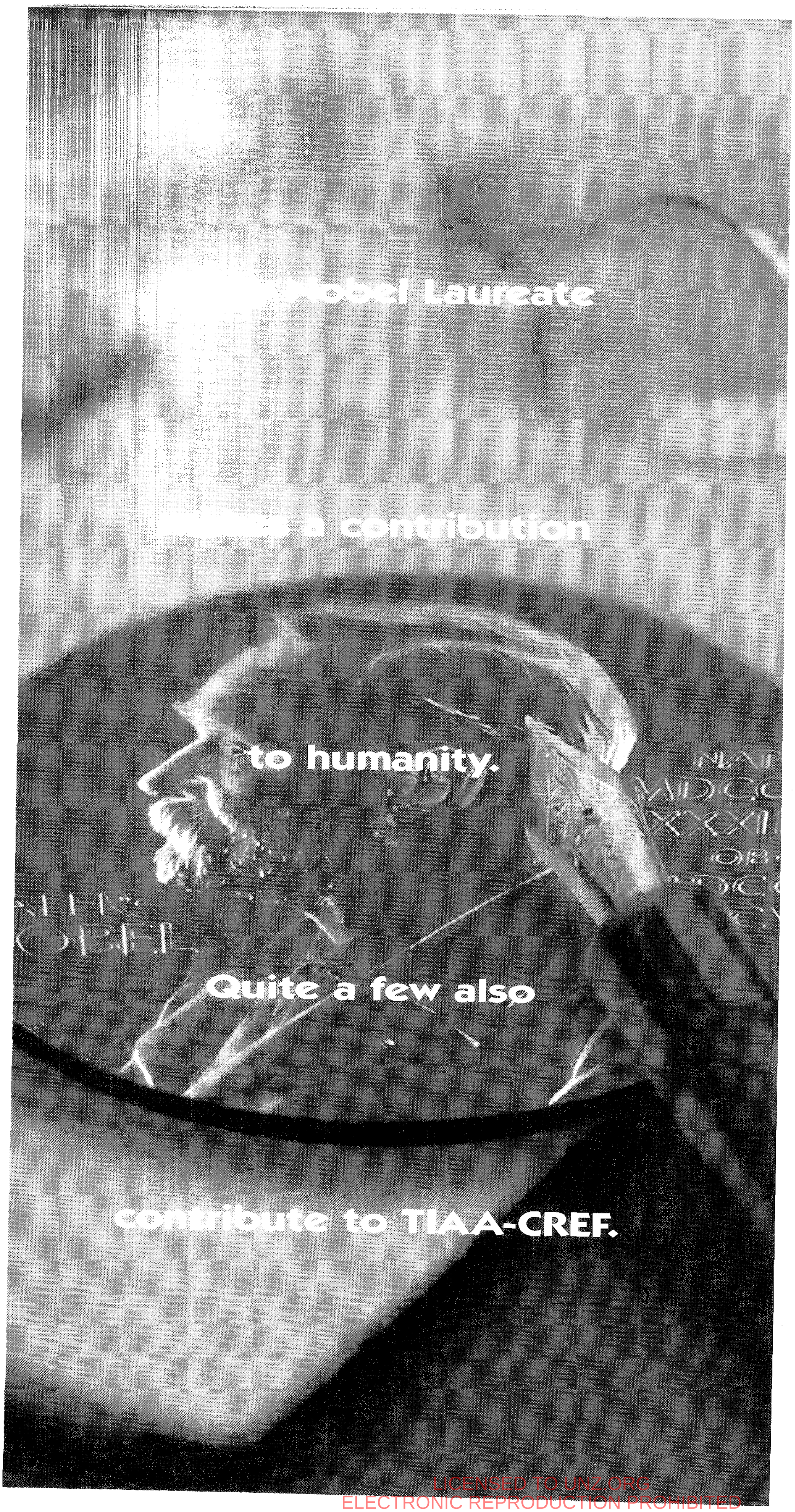
Jeffrey Brooks
Andover, Mass.

TICKED OFF

Kathryn Harrison is one sick puppy! Her piece about finding a tick on her daughter's head and spending hours dismembering it (Personal History, July 29th) is, beneath its chic, literary-hip veneer, nothing more than plain old sadism. What's next—boys pulling wings off flies?

Linda Stein
New York City

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.



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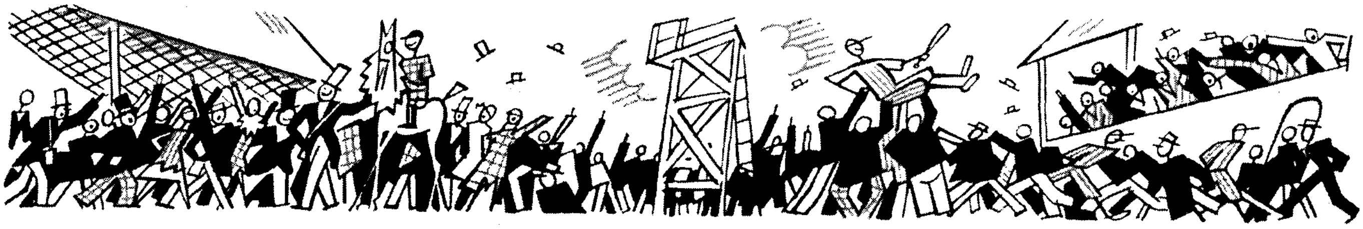

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Back on the Boulevard—An evening with Liliane Montevecchi, who'll sing French cabaret classics and tunes by Cole Porter, Gershwin, and others. In previews. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Broadway on Broadway—A free outdoor concert of numbers from both current and upcoming Broadway musicals. Starring Savion Glover, Rosemary Harris, Bebe Neuwirth, Faith Prince, Chita Rivera, and Ben Vereen, among others. Sept. 8 at noon. (Broadway between 43rd and 45th Sts.)

Disappearing Act—A new revue about big-city gay life, by Michael Oster. Opens Sept. 4 at 7. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Dixon Place—Sept. 4 and Sept. 6-7 at 8: "The Tall Blonde Woman in the Short Puerto Rican Body," Alba Sanchez's solo show about Nuyorican culture. . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 10:30: "Thirty & Bloodthirsty," a new monologue by Amanda Vogel. Both shows continue through Sept. 21. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

International Festival of Puppet Theatre—The biennial series of avant-garde works begins Sept. 10 and runs through Sept. 22. Performances at the Public Theatre (425 Lafayette St.; 563-5544) include "Erotec: The Human Life of Machines," a musical by Alice Farley and Henry Threadgill; "The Baroque Opera," by the Forman Brothers (twin sons of Milos), of the Czech Republic; and a version of Alfred Jarry's burlesque "Ubu Roi," presented by Hystopolis Productions. In addition to a 10:30 P.M. puppet lounge at P.S. 122 (150 First Ave.; 477-5288), the festival will also feature performances at La Mama (74A E. 4th St.; 475-7710), Dance Theatre Workshop (219 W. 19th St.; 924-0077), and the New Victory Theatre (209 W. 42nd St.; 563-5544).

Matty: An Evening with Christy Mathewson—Eddie Frierson stars in his own one-man play, about the life of the celebrated New York Giants pitcher, who in 1936 became one of the first inductees into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Opens Sept. 4 at 8. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Misalliance—The Pearl Theatre Company opens the season with Shaw's 1910 satire. In previews through Sept. 7. Opens Sept. 8 at 2. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

900 Oneonta—Jon Cryer leads the cast in the Circle Repertory Theatre's season opener, a dark comedy by David Beaird about a dying Louisiana oil baron and his damaged family, which had its première last year in London's West End. Previews begin Sept. 5. (159 Bleecker St. 505-6010.)

Old Wicked Songs—Jon Marans' drama, which had its première last November at Playhouse 91, about a jaded young pianist studying in Vienna (Justin Kirk) and the older Viennese music professor (Hal Robinson) who transforms his outlook. Two previews on Sept. 4. Opens Sept. 5 at 6:45. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Othello and the Circumcised Turk—Assurbanipal Babilla's take on the Moor's tragedy incorporates text and characters from other Shakespeare plays and Middle Eastern burlesque traditions. Opens Sept. 5 at 8 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through Sept. 29. (Vineyard's 26th Street Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 925-7469.)

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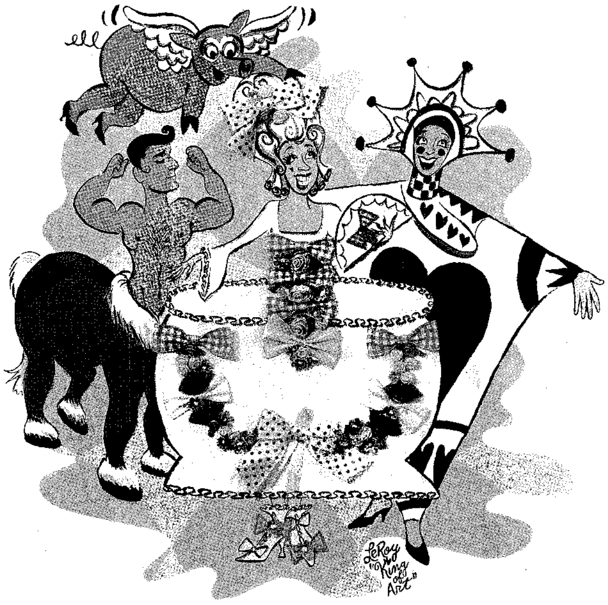
Paved Paradise—Performance artist John Kelly's solo musical work, a paean to Joni Mitchell. Opens Sept. 10 at 8 and continues through Sept. 28. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Skylight—From London, where it was originally staged at the Royal National Theatre, comes David Hare's latest drama, starring Michael Gambon and Lia Williams and directed by Richard Eyre. Previews begin Sept. 9. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)



"Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly."

The Sleeping Hippo—Max Mayer's drama about a woman who becomes involved in a triangle with a poor artist (who hangs out in her run-down East Village bar) and his rich patron. Previews Sept. 5-8. Opens Sept. 9 at 8 and continues through Sept. 29. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 715-1808.)

Summer and Smoke—Mary McDonnell portrays the lonely spinster Alma Winemiller and Harry Hamlin the man she loves, in the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of Tennessee Williams's 1948 drama. Two previews on Sept. 4. Opens Sept. 5 at 7. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The All-Nude College-Girl Revue—A return engagement of Lisa Faith Phillips's semiautobiographical play, about a coed who takes an unconventional job. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Big—This adaptation of the movie that starred Tom Hanks provides little joy, though Daniel Jenkins, as the twelve-year-old in a grown-up's body, is sweet and likable. Directed by Mike Ockrent. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/27/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Born to Sing!—This spin-off of the long-running gospel musical "Mama, I Want to Sing!" chronicles the increasingly chaotic world tour of gospel diva Doris Winter and the New York Reach Ensemble; the plot isn't compelling, and the acting isn't consistently good enough to make a difference. But that hardly matters, since the point, as in "Mama," is the music, and the music is glorious. All four of the main performers (Tanya Blount, Kellie D. Evans, Lisa Fischer, and Stacy Francis) have strong (and distinctly different) voices. Singing both standards and original songs, and backed by the impossibly energetic and gracious music minister, Charles Stewart, and the choir, they give the show the backbone it needs. You couldn't find a better introduction to gospel without going to church. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

The Boys in the Band—James Lecesne, as the swishy Emory, and David Greenspan, as the lethal Harold, have a field day in Mart Crowley's 1968 study of gay self-hatred. The script no longer seems particularly shocking (except in its viciousness) or politically suspect, but it holds up soundly in this impressive revival, which was supervised by the playwright and directed with buckets of bile by Kenneth Elliott. The WPA Theatre production has reopened at the Lucille Lortel. (121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Bring In da Noise, Bring In da Funk—In director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic musical, the extraordinary Glover and his sensational group of young tap dancers and street drummers bring joy. They bring fury. They bring history and ecstasy. (5/20/96) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Chicago City Limits—The improv company takes aim at the 1996 Presidential campaign with a new revue, "Right to Laugh Party." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

The Cocoanuts—The American Jewish Theatre's revival of the Irving Berlin–George S. Kaufman musical that starred the Marx Brothers in 1925—about a Florida land scheme—has moved to a new theatre, changed some cast members, and ironed out a number of the problems that plagued the original production downtown. The songs, which include "Always," and "Shaking the Blues Away," are pleasant enough, but it's the laugh-out-loud comedy that really scores. Michael McGrath, in the Groucho role, is inspired, and Celia Tackaberry, channelling Margaret Dumont, makes a worthy foil. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

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CURTAIN GOING UP

This year's fall theatre season, unlike last year's, brings no returning-diva competition and no obvious Big Theme—but it does bring promise. Here are some of the shows to keep an eye on.

HAPPY RETURNS

Bob Fosse's signature is stamped on both of the John Kander and Fred Ebb musicals returning to Broadway this season: **"CABARET,"** which London's onetime wunderkind Sam Mendes is staging in a cabaret setting, the Supper Club; and **"CHICAGO,"** which stars two performers who worked with Fosse: Ann Reinking and Bebe Neuwirth. (Judging from the sensational semi-staged "Chicago" at City Center last spring, it's unlikely that anything will surpass it for sheer showmanship.) Among the autumn's other musical revivals are Lincoln Center's **"JUAN DARIEN: A CARNIVAL MASS,"** which has a brilliantly imaginative director in Julie Taymor; and **"ONCE UPON A MATTRESS,"** starring Sarah Jessica Parker in a staging by the dependable Gerald Gutierrez.

VIEWS FROM ABROAD

New York won't see the new Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, **"WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND,"** until April, but other English names hit the marquees earlier. Elaine Paige has just made her Broadway début in **"SUNSET BOULEVARD,"** and Michael Gambon makes his this week in David Hare's new **"SKYLIGHT."** Another British import: Ronald Harwood's **"TAKING SIDES,"** with Daniel Massey in a much admired performance as Wilhelm Furtwängler, the Berlin Philharmonic conductor who was accused of collaborating with the Nazis. (Ed Harris co-stars as the American military officer who investigates the case.) BAM, meanwhile, will mount **"THE SEVEN STREAMS OF THE RIVER OTA,"** a two-part, eight-hour extravaganza by the visionary French-Canadian director Robert Lepage, as well as **"THE BEATIFICATION OF AREA BOY,"** by the Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka. And City Center is presenting the National Theatre of Greece's version of **"ELEKTRA,"** starring the spectacular Lydia Koniordous.

AMERICAN SPLENDORS

The season brings new plays from Nicky Silver, David Ives, Paul Rudnick, David Henry Hwang, Peter Feibleman, and Bryan Goluboff. And several maniacally busy homegrown directors will be staging classics, among them David Warren (**"SUMMER AND SMOKE," "MISALLIANCE"**) and Scott Elliott (**"PRESENT LAUGHTER," "THE THREE SISTERS"**). The Atlantic Theatre and the MCC Theatre kick off their seasons with David Mamet's **"EDMOND"** and John Kolvenbach's elegantly titled **"THE GRAVITY OF MEANS,"** respectively. And Jon Marans' absorbing **"OLD WICKED SONGS"** reopens at the theatre many insiders consider New York's finest, the Promenade.

COMEDY SWEEPSTAKES

Illusionist David Copperfield and two estimable collaborators—playwright David Ives and director Francis Ford Coppola—are bringing **"DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES"** to the Martin Beck. Charles Busch's as yet untitled new play at the WPA may end up running simultaneously this spring with his musical **"THE GREEN HEART,"** at Manhattan Theatre Club. Bill Irwin's version of Molière's **"SCAPIN"** and the British jester Eddie Izzard's one-man show look promising, too. Gerald Alessandrini returns to the Triad with his **"FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!,"** and Chris Durang will have **"SEX AND LONGING"** on Broadway, starring his old Stanford buddy Sigourney Weaver.

WOMEN TO WATCH

Julia Sweeney's one-woman show, **"GOD SAID 'HA' "** (which Quentin Tarantino is currently filming) covers a traumatic year in her life; it draws on suffering but leaves a joyful impression. And in **"FULL GALLOP,"** Mary Louise Wilson reprises her star turn as the legendary *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland. In an era when more and more producers are taking a focus-group approach to the theatre, Vreeland's words are a beacon: "I always felt I had a perfectly clear view of what was possible for the public," she says. "Give 'em what they never knew they wanted!"

COWGIRLS—An appealing, if somewhat predictable, musical comedy, in which three chamber musicians are transformed into fringe-wearin', honky-tonkin' cowgirls. Mary Murfitt, the show's composer and lyricist, and Betsy Howie, who wrote the book, are part of the fine cast. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

DA—In the Irish playwright Hugh Leonard's 1978 memory play, the middle-aged Charlie (Ciaran O'Reilly) reconsiders his tangled relationship with his recently deceased father (Brian Murray), who continues to banter with him from the beyond. Murray gives a typically wonderful performance as the title character, whose blithe approach to life has led both his wife (Aideen O'Kelly) and his son to blame him for their own disappointments. Charlotte Moore's assured staging doesn't shy away from the sorrow in Leonard's comedy, and the other members of the first-rate cast shift effortlessly between the past and the present. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Sept. 8.)

A DELICATE BALANCE—A bracing, astringent revival of Edward Albee's 1966 play about a family that has sacrificed much of its humanity for the sake of appearances. The cast, under the fine direction of Gerald Gutierrez, is uniformly excellent. (5/27/96) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM—Burt Shevelove, Larry Gelbart, and Stephen Sondheim's 1962 musical-comedy version of a Roman farce is a joke play that begs for outrageousness. But Jerry Zaks's peppy, acrylic revival seldom enters that giddy zone of comic daring. (5/20/96) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

GRACE & GLORIE—Tom Ziegler's predictable but charmingly told tale of an illiterate Virginia mountain woman (Estelle Parsons) and the Harvard M.B.A. (Lucie Arnaz) who befriends her in her last days. Under Gloria Muzio's direction, the two actresses make the blend of humor and pathos affecting rather than—as it might easily have been—cloying. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY—The exuberant, over-the-top designer Howard Crabtree died in June, and this production (created with and written and directed by Mark Waldrop) is a fitting cap to his career. It's a revue of witty, satiric songs that purport to be part of a larger show that keeps falling apart, leaving Michael West, who plays Crabtree, wondering whether he should have become a chicken farmer. Some of the bits work better than others, but the combination of love songs ("Newt—I think you're cute," sings one forlorn man), charming silliness (a centaur wonders why the other guys at the gym treat him differently), and occasional serious moments, performed by a wonderful cast decked out in Crabtree's sequinned, feathered, mind-boggling costumes, is a sure sign that chicken farming's loss was our gain. With music by Dick Gallagher. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

HUGHIE—Al Pacino stars as the blowhard gambler Erie Smith, in his own staging of Eugene O'Neill's 1941 drama. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

AN IDEAL HUSBAND—In Oscar Wilde's hundred-and-one-year-old play, a youthful transgression comes back to threaten the career of a promising Cabinet member. The man who saves the day is played, with showy aplomb, by Martin Shaw. The rest of the delightful, mostly British cast, under the direction of Peter Hall, is well up to the Wildean wit and wisdom, and the evening flies by in a flash of epigrammatic splendor. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE—In made-for-musical-theatre voices, the appealing cast of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts's crowd-pleasing revue about love and marriage sings songs examining such made-for-musical-theatre issues as parents who talk baby talk, the injustice of long ladies'-room lines, the gruesomeness of bridesmaids' dresses, and the unbearable triteness of shopping. Couples in the audience may nudge each other happily as they guess the actors' lines before they're uttered. Directed by Joel Bishoff. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

THE KING AND I—In a word, magnificent. Hats off to Donna Murphy, as Anna, Lou Diamond Phillips, as the King of Siam, and everyone else (including Rodgers and Hammerstein, of course) who had a hand in this production. Christopher Renshaw directed. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR—In his latest two-hour monologue, Jackie Mason prowls the stage like a rabid penguin, parcelling out tough love with equal-opportunity glee. His range may be limited, but his timing is perfect, and the house rocks with laughter. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

O WHOLLY NIGHT AND OTHER JEWISH SOLECISMS—A new one-woman play written and performed by Deb Margolin, in which a woman not unlike the playwright awaits the Messiah. Directed by Margot Lewitin. (Interart, 549 W. 52nd St. 279-4200.)

PHAEDRA—In his new one-person show, Everett Quinton, of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, plays a gum-chewing waitress in a Greek diner who starts out helping a high-school kid with his homework and ends up taking on all the roles in the tragic soap opera recalled in the title. But although Quinton cuts a striking figure, with his bald head and combat-fatigues gown, his frantic pace suggests that he's trying to make up in sweat what he lacks in art. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 29.)

POSSIBLE WORLDS—Arthur Aulisi gives an earnest but not altogether convincing performance as a man fated to love the same woman (Kathryn Langwell) as he goes through multiple lives, in John Mighton's science-fiction mystery about a rash of crimes in which people are being murdered for their brains. The problem with the play is not just that it's too heavy on the science and too light on the mystery but that it tries to make a love story out of what is essentially an intellectual exercise. (Mighton is a doctoral candidate in mathematics.) The best efforts of the cast may make you think, but they won't make you feel. An Adobe Theatre Company production. (46 Walker St. 560-7387. Closes Sept. 7.)

SEVEN GUITARS—August Wilson's exciting new play flashes back to the final days of a Pittsburgh blues singer (Keith David). The seven guitars of the title are the seven memorable characters whose high times and dashed dreams Wilson turns into beautiful, complex music—a funky, wailing, irresistible Chicago blues. Lloyd Richards is the director. (4/15/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 8.)

VALLEY OF THE DOLLS—Theatre-a-Go-Go, from Los Angeles, offers a stage adaptation of the film adaptation of Jacqueline Susann's novel. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 307-4100. Closes Sept. 14.)

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WHAT THE BUTLER SAW—Jean Cocteau Repertory presents Joe Orton's 1969 satire, directed by Scott Shattuck. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

"BODY OF WORK"—The Everett Dance Theatre, from Providence, Rhode Island, opens Dance Theatre Workshop's fall season with a fast-paced ode to labor. To create the eighty-minute piece, the eight-member company reviewed motion studies of workers from the early industrial revolution, visited New England textile mills, and talked with factory laborers, including men and women laid off in North Adams, Massachusetts, who saw their idle Sprague Electric plant become the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 4-7 at 8.)

PILAR RIOJA—This commanding figure in traditional Spanish dance appears in her twenty-fourth New York season. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Sept. 6-7 at 8, Sept. 8 at 3, and Sept. 10 at 7.)

"TRUE LOVE STORIES"—Choreographer Sharon Fogarty, who specializes in theatrical dance-comedy ("New Works in Old Shoes," "Bride of Frankenstein: An Experiment in Intimacy"), turns confessional in a full-length solo work about amorous misadventures. (Synchronicity Space, 55 Mercer St. 929-3862. Sept. 9-10 at 8.)

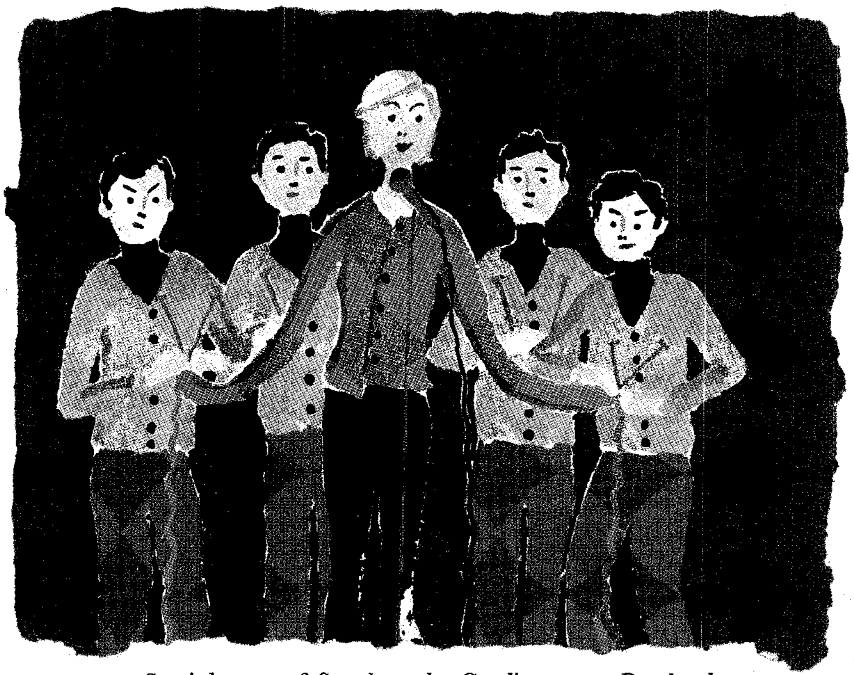
"THE RUNWAY"—As part of the centennial celebrations for the Westbeth Building, which originally housed Bell Labs, Edith Stephen Electric Currents Dance Co. presents satirical fashion choreography: barnyard couture, office outer gear, etc. (55 Bethune St. 989-4650. Sept 6 at 8.)

THE BESSIES—After attending a year's slate of dance and performance art—more than fifteen hundred programs of dancing Laplanders, lieder specialists, standup-improv family sagas, full-company naked dances complete with audience-participation finales, and so on—the selection committee for the New York Dance and Performance Awards has settled on a sheaf of prizes and citations for creators, choreographers, performers, designers, and composers. Since the Bessie nominations—unlike the Tony Award nominations—are officially secret, the ceremonies attract all kinds of artists who suspect they might be up for awards. The place is packed. Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (of Urban Bush Women) and Mark Dendy (of Mark Dendy) host the evening's hyperbole and hijinks, which will include music from Big Joe and dances by Tere O'Connor (deft, ironic) and Compagnie Azanie (sweaty, ecstatic). (LaGuardia Concert Hall, 65th St. at Amsterdam Ave. For reservations, call 691-6500. Sept. 9 at 6:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

PATTI SMITH—It's not sufficient to say that "Gone Again," the first new collection in nearly ten years from this pioneering poet of punk, is spectacular: it's a bona-fide event, bursting with pain, humor, danger, warmth, spirituality, sensuality, and reaffirmation of rock and roll's ability to liberate. It's also far closer in spirit to her groundbreaking 1975 début, "Horses," than to her previous comeback, the 1988 "Dream of Life." That she could channel all her recent losses—the deaths of friends (Robert Mapplethorpe), colleagues (pianist Richard Sohl), and, within a month of each other in late 1994, her younger brother, Todd, and her husband, former MC5 guitarist Fred Smith—into such a positive work is remarkable and inspiring. She'll be supported by a band that includes her old aide-de-camp Lenny Kaye on guitar. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 307-7171. Sept. 5 at 7.)



Straight out of Sweden: the Cardigans, at Roseland.

ELIZA GRAN

LES CLAYPOOL—The force behind Primus, a band that mixes virtuoso musicianship with a dunce-capped punk attitude, embarks on his first solo tour. On Primus's most recent album, "Tales from the Punchbowl," Claypool tackled the big issues the way he tackles weird time signatures—with nose-thumbing nonchalance. (Emblematic inspirational verse: "Is there heaven? / Is there hell? / Is that tuna melt I smell?") He's a brilliant bass player, and, if he transcends his infantile streak, he may just wind up as the next Frank Zappa. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. Sept. 5 at 7:30.)

THE CARDIGANS—The biggest thing to come out of Sweden since ABBA, this quintet of four poker-faced guys fronted by the fetching Nina Persson, makes a sickly sweet yet somehow extremely likable retro-pop sound. Their 1995 début, "Life," featured finger snaps and kitschy Farfisa organs; their new effort, "The First Band on the Moon," has the same cartoonish charm. Opening is the very hot Welsh band Gorky's Zygotic Mynci. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Sept. 5 at 8.)

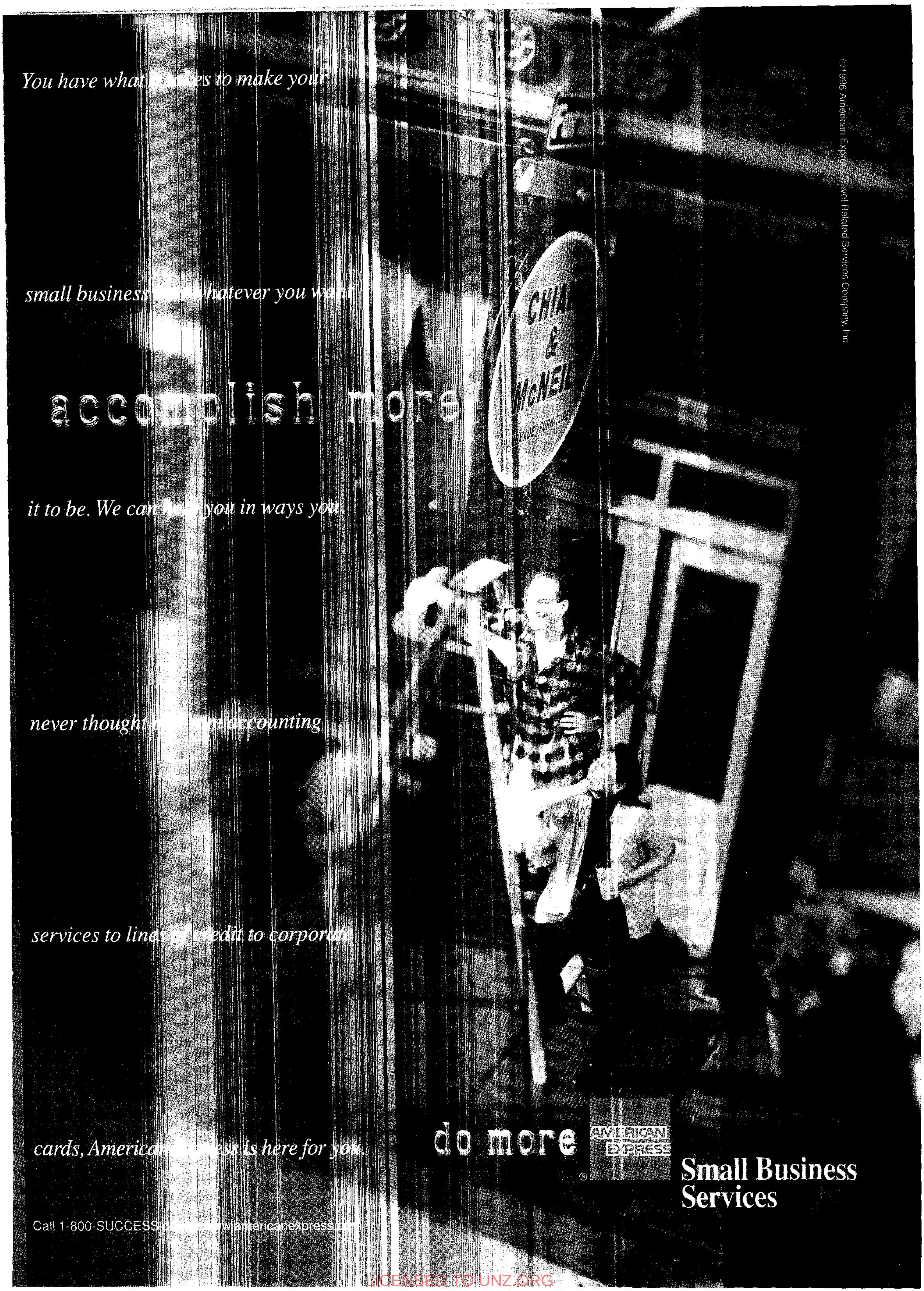
BIOHAZARD—A hardcore evening. (Roseland. Sept. 6 at 7.)

THE CRANBERRIES / CRACKER—This Irish quartet began as a gentle pop band, but there isn't much gentleness left on their bombastic new "To the Faithful Departed." Singer Dolores O'Riordan's anguish rings hollow, and her dunderheaded lyrics—particularly on "Bosnia" and the preposterous "I Just Shot John Lennon"—make Bono sound like a model of restraint. / Cracker's new album, "The Golden Age," has songwriter David Lowery juggling, with newfound vigor, the same disparate sensibilities—white-trash woe and post-slacker doldrums—that defined the group's two prior disks (and Lowery's career with cult favorites Camper Van Beethoven). This may be the Golden Age, but he's still wondering where he fits in. ("I hate my generation.") If Lowery's depressed, at least he's finally earning a living. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Sept. 6 at 7:30.)

GLORIA ESTEFAN—The Cuban thrush has come a long way since her early days with the Miami Sound Machine. Her recent recordings—particularly "Mi Tierra" (1993) and "Abriendo Puertas" (1995), which marked a return to her Latino roots, and her entertaining collection of covers, "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" (1994)—have been increasingly ambitious. Her latest, "Destiny," is her most assured yet: a percussion-laden party that includes everything from a passionate bolero to traditional pop ballads. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Sept. 6-8 at 8.)

LYLE LOVETT / LISA LOEB—Having spent the past few years in tabloid hell, the wry, dapper Texan with the ten-gallon haircut has now returned to his original incarnation, a wonderfully strange singer-songwriter. His most recent album, "The Road to Ensenada," is another impeccable collection of delicate, heartfelt, and weirdly ironic songs, and a lovely mélange of folk, blues, and R. & B. His live shows are fun; they're also surprisingly emotional. / Two years ago, Loeb enjoyed her fifteen minutes with "Stay," a charming folk-pop ditty that poached liberally from the best of Suzanne Vega and Jane Siberry; she also looked cool and brainy in her thick black horn-rim specs. Since then she's released "Tails," an above-average record, and reverted to being just another talented performer. (The Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Sept. 7 at 8.)

OASIS—The sailing's been smoother than smooth for these stoic moptops from Manchester. Their second disk, "(What's the Story) Morning Glory," has stared down the sophomore



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jinx, and, buoyed by the global radio saturation of "Wonderwall," the Fab Five are finally enjoying the rock-god status they've so long aspired to. Here's a band that—like the Beatles and the Stones—isn't afraid to believe its own hype. (Jones Beach Theatre. Sept. 7-8 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Kevin Moore, a.k.a. **KEB' MO'** (Sept. 10), is a deft blues guitarist and singer who brings to mind the young Taj Mahal.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Sept. 6: Local heroes **SKELETON KEY** and groovy instrumental rockers **TRANS AM.** Sept. 8: Up-and-coming Welsh stars **GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI.** Sept. 9: The **RAINCOATS** and the **BUSH TETRAS.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Sept. 6-7: **POPA CHUBBY.**

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district. Sept. 5: **CHAINSAW KITTENS.** This little combo from Norman, Oklahoma, may be the best rock band you've never heard of. They've been at it for years, but their forthcoming disk on Mercury is their crowning glory: an elegant update of classic pop à la Cheap Trick and classic cool in the vein of Lou Reed and Iggy Pop.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Sept. 4: The **WILD COLONIALS** are the salonistes of the L.A. music scene. Dr. John, Cyndi Lauper, and Rickie Lee Jones are among the guests on the band's new album, "This Can't Be Life," which is driven by Angela McCluskey's honey-and-hot-sauce vocals. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

The Greatest Bar on Earth, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Sept. 4: **ARCHERS OF LOAF.** Sept. 6: **LUSCIOUS JACKSON,** a decidedly New Yawk group of women whose ebullient blend of hip-hop and raucous pop makes it impossible to pigeonhole. "In Search of Manny," their 1993 début, on the Beastie Boys' Grand Royal label, was wonderful. But all you really need to know is that Deborah Harry is a fan. Sept. 7: **JOHNNY CASH.** His "American Recordings" (1994) presented a singer alone at the microphone with his acoustic guitar. In certain quarters it was hailed as a revelation—which was something of a joke, since most of his great sixties hits for Columbia were recorded with the same skeletal approach. Still, the album offered such concentrated gloom and doom that it slapped people to attention. Live he's no moping folkie—not by a long shot. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 4: Top-shelf alternative rock with **LOW** and **VERSUS.** Sept. 6: Former Living Colour guitarist **VERNON REID** headlines an experimental lineup. Sept. 7: **JONATHAN RICHMAN** preaches to the converted.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Sept. 4: **PANSY DIVISION.** Sept. 6: The cello-and-corset pop of **SPLENDORA.** Sept. 8: **WILCO** and the **HEALTH AND HAPPINESS SHOW.** When the acclaimed country-punk group Uncle Tupelo disbanded, singer Jay Farrar went on to form Son Volt, while his former songwriting partner, Jeff Tweedy, gave the world the more charismatic Wilco. Tweedy's songs are less piercing than Farrar's tortured vignettes, but his band has a rare enthusiasm: with slithering fiddles, cranking guitars, and rootsy charm, they turn every gig into a hoedown.

TABLES FOR TWO

JUdson Grill, 152 W. 52nd St. (582-5252)—"Night and day, you are the one . . . ," croons Ella over the JUdson speakers, and Ella was never wrong. Lunchtimes, this vaulted mahogany ballroom hums with the predictable suits and ties, seasoned in summer with tourists. But later is better. At the cocktail hour, attorneys and editors perch, sip, nibble, and schmooze at the bar. Then, around sundown, the lights dim, the quartet of vast copper-leaf vases, which look like upended Liberty Bells, gleam brighter on their pedestals, and diners spin through the revolving doors for an old-fashioned glamorous night.

A waiter sporting a spiffy Eton collar, a striped cravat, and a matching British accent brings a white-bean-pesto mash with bread and menus. You have to make a special request for the excellent Chef's Dinner menu—five courses, with co-dependent wines—about which JUdson is mysteriously coy. Maybe it's modesty over the staff's implausible youth: John Villa, the chef, is twenty-six; sous chef Chloe Osborne is twenty-seven; and Jimmy Skinner, the pastry chef, is twenty-six. In the hands of such babes, you might expect culinary gaucherie, but their food is precise and fun and original. Salt-cod gnocchi, an olive-crusted salmon, and a tuna loin all have a North African accent; wonton potstickers are, obviously, Asian; the pork chop dresses like an Italian, in creamy polenta and broccoli rabe. What label to slap on this culture-hopping food? The British waiter has the right idea: "As me old nan used to say," he shrugs when his name is mispronounced, "call me anything but late for lunch." (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner; Saturday for dinner only. Entrées $17-$29.)

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Sept. 5: **CRACKER** warms up for its Jones Beach gig (see Concerts). With the cool parlor pop of **ELYSIAN FIELDS.** Sept. 7: **CHAVEZ,** a kind of indie-rock supergroup, featuring former members of Live Skull and Bullet LaVolta. With the fine, heartbreaking rock of the **RED HOUSE PAINTERS.**

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Sept. 4: The **BUZZCOCKS.** These original U.K. punks broke up in 1980 and re-formed in 1993, just in time to see Green Day cashing in on their demolition-derby sound. Their terrific recent album, "All Set," finds Pete Shelley and company still sticking out their tongues at the amateurs.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Sept. 4: **FACE TO FACE** and the **SMOKING POPES.** Sept. 5: Though many still consider singer-guitarist Lou Barlow the original—and finest—of the lo-fi indie rockers, **SEBADOH,** his primary band, seems to have moved away from its acoustic roots. Actually, the wildly eclectic band of old, a group capable of covering the Minutemen and David Crosby with equal aplomb, simply splintered into a long series of side projects (Sparkalepsy, Sentridoh, Deluxxe Folk Implosion, et al.). Having shed so many skins, today's Sebadoh is a leaner but not entirely new animal; the trio continues to play perfectly crafted, honest (read: ambiguous and emotionally twisted), impassioned songs about love and hate. Sept. 7: The **WEDDING PRESENT.** This famed Leeds band, led by ace songwriter David Gedge, has never made it on these shores, but that hasn't stopped it from delivering a tome's worth of songs full of spiky wit and sharp melody, and guitar work that veers from jangle to jackhammer. The band cruises into town for a rare gig, in support of their last album, "Miniplus," a collection of joyful songs about cars.

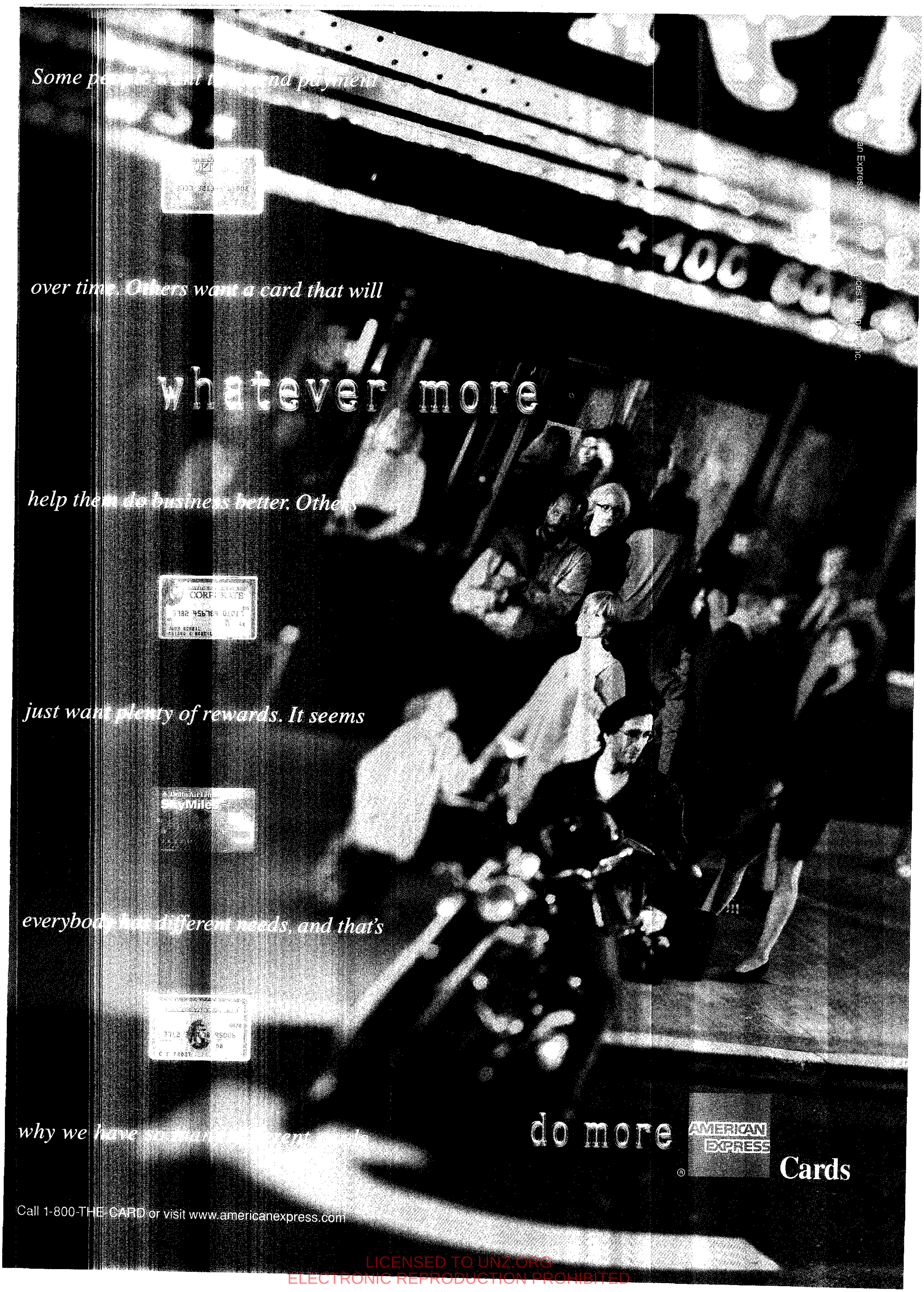
Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Sept. 5: The **NEUROTIC OUTSIDERS,** with former members of Guns & Roses. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Sept. 4: Hip-hop with the **ROOTS.** Sept. 6: **JUNIOR BROWN AND JIM LAUDERDALE.** An Indiana cowboy with a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools, Brown is something of a country-and-Western throwback. He has a sense of humor, too: his guitar-propelled material is populated with state troopers and hula girls. But his fearsome-looking "guit steel"—a cross between a Fender Bullet and an old lap steel guitar—is what has made his reputation. He's probably the only guitarist who can switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar. / Lauderdale has a little bit of Roger Miller-style mischief in his soul, but his carefully crafted, slightly surreal song confections are far from novelty numbers. Sept. 7: The **JUNGLE BROTHERS.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—An airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Sept. 8: the **PHAROAH SANDERS** group and the **JACKY TERRASSON** trio. With his talent for titanic eruptions now tempered by an equal flair for soulful ballads, Sanders has become the complete saxophonist. It's been quite an evolution. Once a roaring iconoclast—he used to make even late-period Coltrane sound reserved—he now embraces the audience with a colossal tone and naked emotion. / The pianist of the moment is a defiant individualist in the manner of, say,

*Some people want to extend payment over time. Others want a card that will help them do business better. Others just want plenty of rewards. It seems everybody has different needs, and that's why we have so many different cards.*

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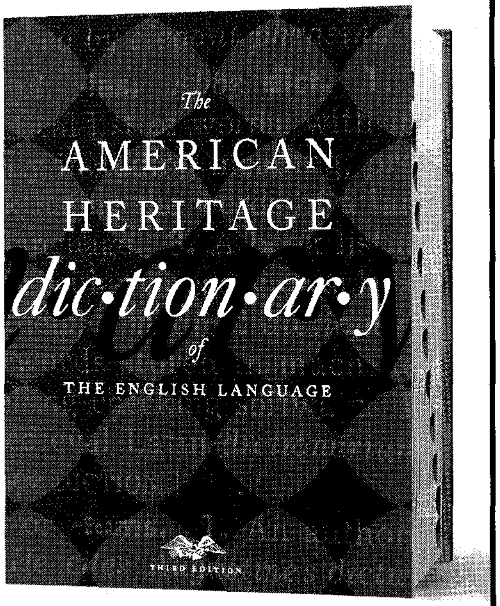
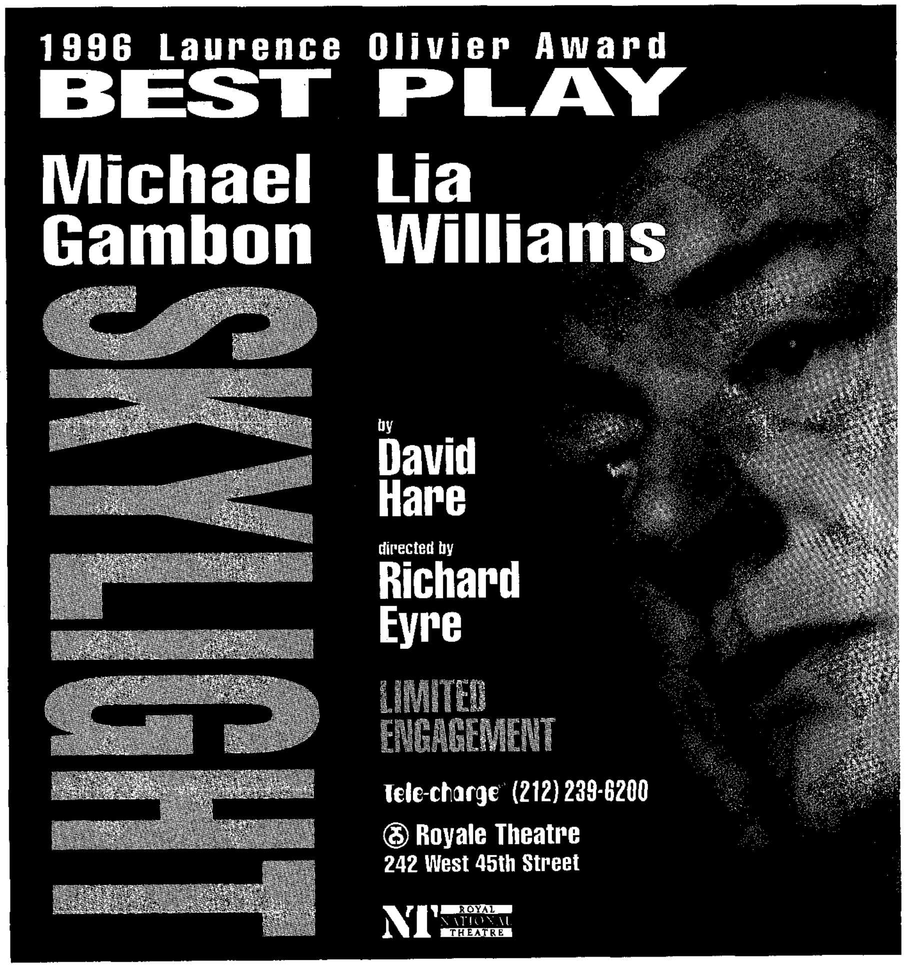


HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

THE DICTIONARY FOR OUR TIMES



Keith Jarrett circa 1973. He plays the way he wants to play: tempos, dynamics, arrangements are just so much wax to be bent, shaped, and messed with. A Terrasson set is flexible—it all depends on his mood. The spontaneity may be admirable and exciting, but why does it all sound so mannered? The PHIL WOODS quintet and the PAT MARTINO quartet take over on Sept. 10. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through Sept. 7: the BRUCE BARTH trio. Having made his mark as the pianist in Terence Blanchard's band, Barth—a young modernist forging his way on the path of neo-con heros like Herbie Hancock—enters the fray on his own.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues Band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz Band.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. The MARCUS PRINTUP quintet begins a weeklong run on Sept. 10.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 8-9: The SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great GENE BERTONCINI lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. FAITH PRINCE is in charge through late September. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. MULGREW MILLER (through Sept. 8) is a product of Memphis, a town whose jazz pianists invariably fall under the looming, legendary shadow of Phineas Newborn. Miller tested his mettle with Art Blakey in the eighties; he can be loquacious, but his grand touch and sweeping attack are never overwhelming. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Sept. 8: the CLARK TERRY quintet. Terry is a very funny guy. He tells jokes, sings gibberish songs, and, in between, plays some of the most sophisticated flugelhorn and trumpet you'll ever hear. He came up with the big bands, doing a stint with Basie and a brilliant one with Ellington, so his wildly personal style smacks as much of swing as it does of bop. The RON CARTER quintet gets the call starting Sept. 10. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Sept. 7: Piano, bass, and guitar with John Bunch, Bob Haggart, and Bucky Pizzarelli. Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Winslow Homer," a comprehensive survey of the painter's career, comprising nearly two hundred paintings, watercolors, and drawings. The exhibition is sumptuous, deeply satisfying, and well balanced, and it reveals unsuspected depths in Homer's art. Yet the images that will stay with you are the stout-hearted mountain guides, the bashful adolescent lovers, the daydreaming schoolteacher oblivious of her pupils' innocent games under cloudless skies. Was America ever really such an idyllic place? The dark edges are there (some of the seascapes are truly terrifying), but the overwhelming impression is of a defiantly hopeful spirit; even the early, reportorial Civil War paintings emphasize the camaraderie and bravery of the soldiers rather than their suffering. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Toulouse-Lautrec." After the successes of its Rembrandt and Goya exhibitions, the museum now attempts to pull off another homegrown blockbuster with its Toulouse-Lautrec holdings. The result is highly entertaining, but it lacks the breadth and authority of its predecessors. The Met's collection consists almost entirely of Lautrec's graphic works on theatrical subjects, including many of the brilliantly designed posters and evocative lithographs that number among the artist's most important works. But the museum has only a handful of his paintings and drawings, and minor ones at that—a situation that creates a rather lopsided view of his career. Inevitably, there is a video gallery, which presents a *très gai* clip from Jean Renoir's film "French Cancan." Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ More than eight hundred musical instruments from the museum's vast collection remain on permanent view in the André Mertens Galleries, on the second floor. Among the highlights are the oldest extant piano (1720, Bartolomeo Cristofori), violins by luthiers Stradivari and Amati, and a Ming dynasty pi-pa (or lute), with a hundred and ten carved-ivory plaques on its back. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (weather permitting), with sculptures by Rodin, Lachaise, Lipchitz, Caro, Smith (David), and Smith (Tony). Through Oct. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

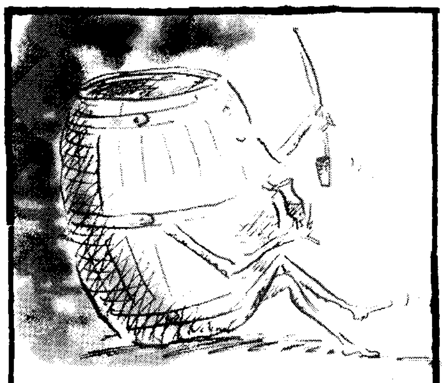
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation" includes a hundred and thirty paintings, and nearly as many works on paper, depicting lovers, wives, poets, art dealers, and children. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Pictures of the Times: A Century of Prints from the New York *Times*." Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-95," an ambitious and engaging show that covers a lot of ground in a thematically unified manner—linking the advent of new printmakers (e.g., Barbara Kruger, Félix González-Torres, Kiki Smith) with such recent trends as the resurgence of politically engaged art and of metaphors of the body. Through Sept. 10. (For the run of the Picasso show, the museum's hours are Saturdays through Mondays, 9:30 to 6; Tuesdays, 11 to 6; and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30. Timed-entry tickets to Picasso are available in the lobby and through Ticketmaster, at 307-4545.)

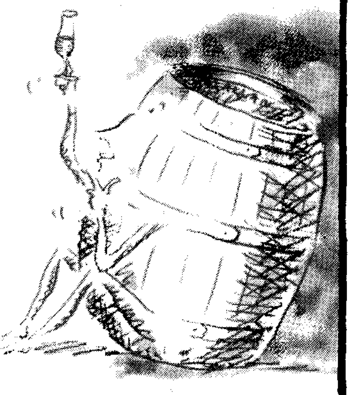
Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Africa: The Art of a Continent." This exhibition is bound to infuriate both scholars and ideologues with the manner in which it collapses historical, ethnographic, and aesthetic distinctions between diverse cultures (imagine an exhibition titled "Europe: The Art of a Continent"). In presenting the predominantly Islamic arts of Northern Africa, the antiquities of Egypt, and the many different cultures of sub-Saharan Africa all at once, the curators seem to propound two overlapping but not particularly cogent ideological agendas: a celebratory Pan-Africanism on the one hand and a "Family of Man" group hug on the other. That said, the show is still a must-see for its rich selection of resplendent objects. And the catalogue is filled with excellent essays by renowned scholars of the new black studies. Through Sept. 25. . . . ¶ "In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present." The first exhibition of this scope on this topic in New York includes work by twenty-eight artists, from forties studio portraits by Salla Casset and Seydou Keita to more personal and experimental photographs from the eighties and nineties by Santu Mofokeng, Gordon Bleach, Oladélé Ajiboyé Bamgboyé, and Mody Sory Diallo. One section of the show features pictures published in *Drum*, the influential magazine founded in South Africa in 1951 and subsequently published in Nigeria, Ghana, and East and Central Africa as well. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Meret Oppenheim: Beyond the Teacup." Through Oct. 9. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"NYNY: City of Ambition." The perfect summer show, an anthology of twentieth-century images of New York drawn mostly from the permanent collection, presented in an installation as bold, entertaining, and aggressive as the city itself. The emphasis is on photography, from the lavender majesty of Steichen's nocturnes to the gritty realism of Weegee, but some favorite paintings are dusted off as well: Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward Hopper, Charles Sheeler, and Joseph Stella are among those well represented. The architectural models of the Empire State Building (in carved plaster) and Rockefeller Center (in finely detailed wood) are fascinating—but why is a cocktail dress draped over Mies van der Rohe's model of the Seagram Building? Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ "Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West," a subdued, library-style exhibit of books and prints from 1848 to the present, which makes up in substance for what it lacks in fire. Most of the landmark photographic books on the subject are here—competing railroad reports illustrated by Alexander Gardner and A. J. Russell; mammoth survey albums that include works by Timothy O'Sullivan, Carleton Watkins, and William Henry Jackson; "An American Exodus," the searing Dust Bowl record by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor; "From the Missouri West," Robert Adams's complex revisioning of the land. And the prints are delightful. One O'Sullivan photograph details velvety black outcroppings of columnar basalt lining a volcanic ridge; in an exquisitely toned picture by Laura Gilpin, a powerful storm sweeps over the floodplain of the Rio Grande. Other well-chosen works come from Frederick Sommer, Edward Weston, Eliot Porter, Ansel Adams, Lewis Baltz, Mark Klett, Richard Misrach, and Lee Friedlander. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "An American Story," a survey of twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, both well known and obscure, from the museum's collection. Through Oct. 6. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Okavango: Africa's Last Eden," thirty large color photographs by Frans Lanting, of the wildlife of the Okavango Delta, in Botswana. . . . ¶ An exhibition that explores the relationship between scientific research and its presentation in the media—specifically, the *Times*. Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ The Hall of Vertebrate Origins has reopened, its dropped ceiling removed to reveal Calvert Vaux's skylit design. All the better to see the dunkleosteus, a sixteen-foot-long hanging model of an armored fish, with self-sharpening jawbones, based on a four-foot-long fossil of its head. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Breaking Barriers: Recent American Craft,"





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a wide range of works by such artists as Jean Williams Cacicedo (large felt coats), Viola Frey (painted ceramic figures), Albert Paley (bent-steel furniture), and Jane Sauer (fibre sculptures). Through Oct. 13. . . . ¶ Patrick Dougherty's "Crossing Over," a large, vortexlike sculpture made from intertwined saplings and branches. Through Oct. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

The Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Illegal Camera." The Nazi occupation of the Netherlands is best known to most of us through Anne Frank's diary, but another secret record of the era was made by Dutch photographers, both professional and amateur; a selection of their work has been gathered in this stunning exhibition. They risked everything to document the events that were transforming their peaceable nation into hell, pointing their cameras out windows, to record the occupiers tramping down their streets and pillaging their homes, and inward, to capture the hidden life of the Jews and resistance fighters who faced constant danger. Their surreptitiousness gives the pictures a chilling immediacy: angles tilt crazily, focus wavers, and in a few shots ghost images from a room are reflected on the window through which the lens is aimed. An awful sense of the enigmatic creeps in. A group of gray, faceless men in dark suits are being shepherded down the street by German soldiers—where are they going? We don't know, and we sense that our worst surmise may fall short of the mark. Through Dec. 1. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Drawing the Future: Design Drawings for the 1939 New York World's Fair." The visions of two dozen architects, artists, and designers, including studies for the Trylon and the Persiphere and a fabulous unrealized fantasy by Frank Paul: a giant Roman centurion by the name of Micromegas sitting on a domed building and contemplating a globe resting on his knee. . . . ¶ "Gaelic Gotham: A History of the Irish in New York" features more than four hundred paintings, prints, photographs, costumes, and other objects, from the museum's collection and on loan from many other institutions. Through Oct. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Part II of "The Hand of the Poet" presents original manuscripts by the likes of Cummings, Moore, Merrill, Auden, Bishop, Lowell, Moss, Nabokov, and Sexton. . . . ¶ "Headlines, Deadlines, Bylines: The New York *Times* Morgue, 1896-1996." Through Oct. 18. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Ceremony and Spirit: Nature and Memory in Contemporary Latino Art," an exhibit of paintings and mixed-medium installations by sixteen artists, among them Josely Carvalho, George Crespo, Ester Hernandez, Frank Lopez-Motnyk, Pepón Osorio, and Regina Vater. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ This year's artists-in-residence show, titled ". . . To Carry Me Home," features a relief sculpture by Chakaia Booker, a painting by Richard Lewis, and a sculptural installation by Michael Richards. Through Sept. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Bicycles: History, Beauty, Fantasy"—An appreciation of the bike's evolution from 1817 to 1920, including examples of the Phantom velocipede (the first bicycle with a rubber tire), the Ariel (the first manufactured high-wheeler), and the Old Hickory Ladies' Model (made from sixteen plies of laminated second-growth hickory). Through Oct. 4. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

"Breaking All the Rules"—A recap of all the gallery's shows from the past season, with works by Beckmann, Coe, Corinth, Grosz, Klimt, Kokoschka, Litwak, Pippin, Schiele, and others. Through Sept. 6. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Exactitude"—Realist, figurative—whatever it is, there's a lot of detail. Among the artists whose works are on view are William Bailey, Kent Bellows, Philip Evergood, Raymond Han, Jane Lund, and Max Weber. Through Sept. 7. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Group Show—Sculptures and paintings by Donald Judd, Joel Shapiro, Barbara Hepworth, Elizabeth Murray, and Robert Mangold. Through Sept. 7. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

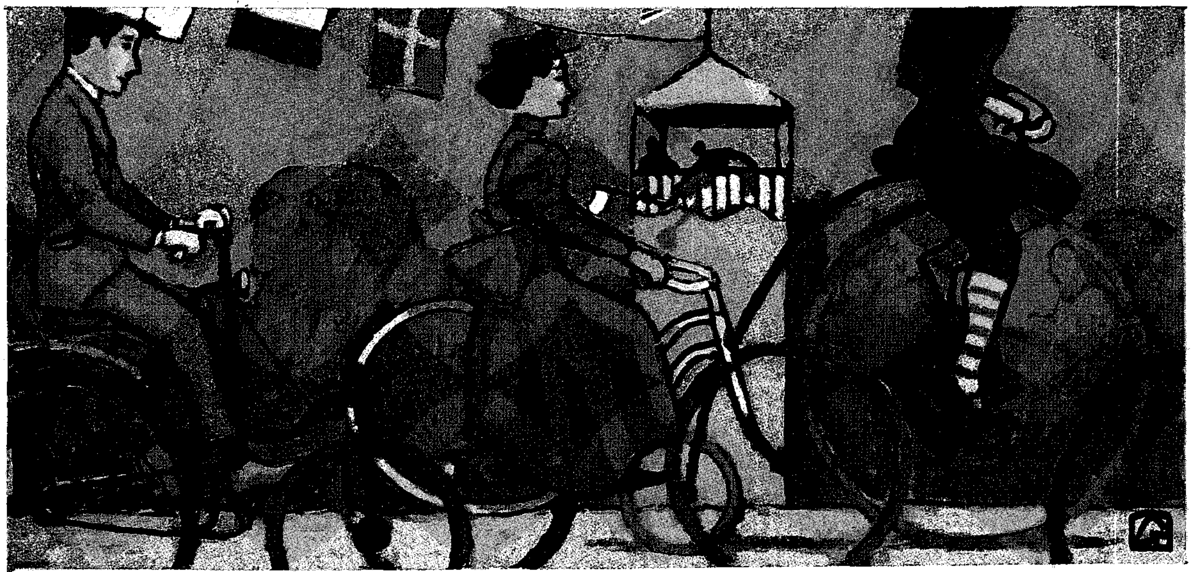
Season Openers—JAKE BERTHOT and **HARVEY QUAYTMAN,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Both shows open Sept. 5. . . . **ALAN BRAY,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Opens Sept. 4. . . . **LEONARDO DREW,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **AARON HARRY GORSON,** Spanierman, 45 E. 58th St. Opens Sept. 9. . . . **JOHN RUSKIN,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; opens Sept. 5. . . . **DAVID SMITH,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **ANTON VAN DALEN,** Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. Opens Sept. 10.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

SoHo Arts Festival—What started as a one-night block party in 1993 has ballooned into a four-day affair. On Sept. 5-8, you can visit the hundred or so participating galleries, and there will also be dance, music, and theatre performances, readings, and film screenings. There will be a Festival Information Center at the corner of Prince and Mercer Streets. For more information, call 925-4200.

"Shopping"—The transformation of SoHo into a tourism-and-shopping Mecca, along with the rise of the Chelsea galleries, has brought the neighborhood's preëminence as a place for viewing contemporary art into question. In last month's "SoHo So Long" (at American Fine Arts), the artists' collaborative AC2K examined the district's possible demise as an art center in a clever, trenchant way. The artists in "Shopping," in contrast, try to put a positive spin on the phenomenon by envisioning a vital (albeit radically different) role for art in SoHo, both colluding with and rebelling against the green slime of ordinary commerce. The show is really an informal walking tour, with art installed in a wide variety of restaurants, hairdressing salons, and shops. And "wide" is no exaggeration: while Vanessa Beecroft colonizes the ultra-chic Miu Miu store (100 Prince St.) and Jane Kaplowitz invades the Kate Spade handbag emporium (59 Thompson St.), Jim Anderson has taken his video "XXX Dolly" to the twenty-four-hour peep-show booths at West Video (375 Canal St., at West Broadway), on the raw fringes of the neighborhood. The project, part of the SoHo Arts Festival, starts Sept. 5 and continues through Sept. 21. (For more information, call Deitch Projects at 343-7300.)

Season Openers—POLLY APFELBAUM, Boesky & Callery, 51 Greene St. Through Oct. 5. . . . **ROBERT CUMMING,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **KATHLEEN GILJE,** Bravin Post Lee, 80 Mercer St. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **MICHAEL GREGORY,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **PETER HRISTOFF,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **MARTIN KERSELS,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **WALTER MARTIN AND PALOMA MUÑOZ,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **PAUL MC CARTHY,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **ALIX PEARLSTEIN,** Postmasters, 80 Greene



A pedaller's delight: "Bicycles: History, Beauty, Fantasy," at the PaineWebber Building.

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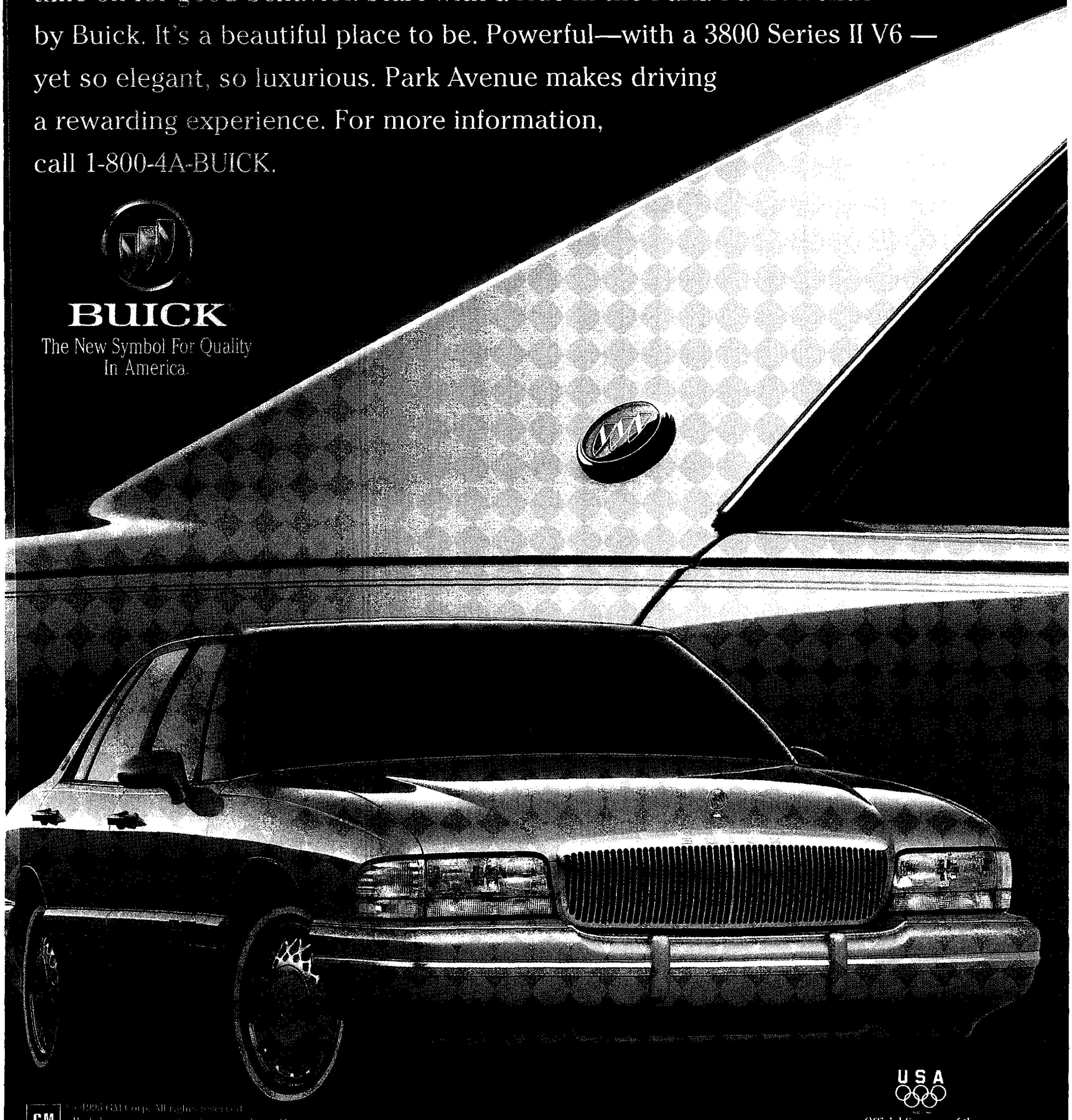

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St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **FRED SANDBACK,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **PATH SOONG,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **RUDI TRÖGER,** Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway. Opens Sept. 7.

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Delirium"—Summer group shows generally shoot for a light spirit and an easily grasped theme (or none at all); this large selection of portraits and a few abstract images, from 1854 to the present, has a darker cast, and it hangs together beautifully. "Delirium" has been defined broadly by curator W. M. Hunt as anything from ecstasy to despair to the swooning, sickening feeling you get just looking at certain pictures. Hence W. Eugene Smith's famous "Mad Eyes, Haiti" (1959), of a demented-looking head emerging from (or receding into) total blackness, makes sense in proximity to Felix Meheux's 1905 image of grisly surgical incisions on the face of a cadaver. A grimacing Janis Joplin, head aslant and hair astray, is transformed into a pained goddess by Art Kane, while on the same wall Nancy Burson offers her blurred closeup of a woman with the largest bulging eyes you ever saw. Other notable pictures are reportorial (Jill Waterman, George Krause, Weegee), sexual (Saul Leiter, David Lachapelle, Robert Mapplethorpe), and experimental (Joe Mills, Gerald Slota, Eric Rondpierre). Through Sept. 8. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Hunt will give a curator's talk on Sept. 7 at 2. Call 780-0071 for reservations.)

"Games People Play"—A hundred years of images from the New York City Parks Department's photo archives: nineteenth-century croquet matches, latter-day hoops, a 1968 giant-Tinkertoy fest, fedoraed checkers players in 1934. Through Sept. 13. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. Open weekdays 9 to 4:30.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Landscapes of the Civil War." Selections from the five thousand recently discovered albumen prints in the collection of the Medford (Massachusetts) Historical Society. Through Nov. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"In Times of War and Peace." This too large retrospective of photojournalism by the forty-year-old twins David and Peter Turnley covers and recovers so much ground that you're beaten down and exhausted by the end—but it's worth it. The anguish of a Romanian factory worker or of a Zairean child is overwhelming; the reportage dealing with the end of South African apartheid and the carnage in Tiananmen Square is concise and riveting. Each photographer makes a fine portrait and renders an exquisite sense of place. Peter often shows a greater command of color and composition, while David, the more intuitive, has a flair for capturing the decisive moments. Through Sept. 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

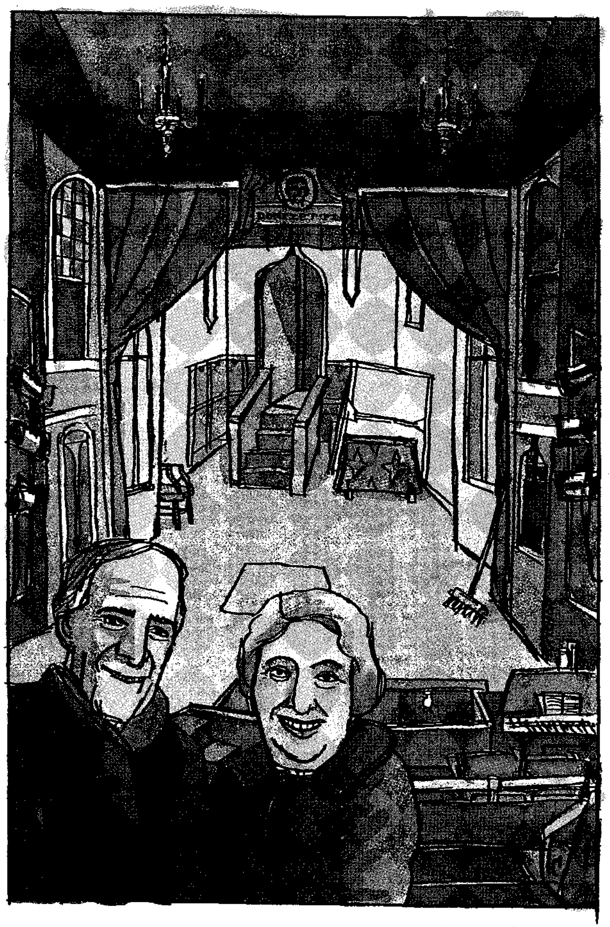
Season Openers—**JEFF BURTON,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. Opens Sept. 6. . . . **ROBERT CAPA,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **PATRICK FAIGENBAUM,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **LEWIS HINE,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Opens Sept. 6. . . . **RUDOLF KOPPITZ,** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Opens Sept. 10. . . . **ANNIE LEIBOVITZ,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **LOUIS LUSSIER,** Shainman, 560 Broadway. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **RICHARD MISRACH,** Marcus, 578 Broadway. Opens Sept. 5. . . . **JOSEFA MULAIRE,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Opens Sept. 7. . . . **FREDERIC WEBER** and **ALVIN BOOTH,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. Opens Sept. 5.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Jewish Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Harmonia Opera Company—The Japanese-American troupe celebrates its fifteenth anniversary with the première of Robin Berger's "The Streets of Japan" (a staged setting of six folk songs that depict aspects of Japanese regional life) and an adaptation of Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" (sung in Japanese, with sets and costumes to match). The company also exhibits the Asian reverence for older members of society by presenting the soprano Lucine Amara, now within six months of her seventieth birthday, singing excerpts from "Le Nozze di Figaro." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. Sept. 7 at 7. For information about tickets, call 870-1500.)



Anthony and Sally Amato, of the Amato Opera Company.

BEN KATCHOR

Amato Opera Company—The company opens its forty-ninth consecutive season with Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor." Forty-nine years is a long time to keep any business going, let alone one in an industry as precarious as opera, but that's precisely what Anthony and Sally Amato have done. They founded their mom-and-pop opera company in 1948, as newlyweds, and they've kept it vital ever since. In 1959, after nearly a dozen vagabond seasons, the company established its home on the Bowery, where the building's vaguely Wild West-style façade still stands out from its surroundings. The auditorium is intimate, with seating for a hundred and seven (which means that people must be turned away from nearly every performance), a stage that measures twenty-by-twenty-five-feet, and an orchestra pit that holds just eight players (winds and a synthesizer, but no strings, since there's not enough elbow room for bowing). These limitations have never deterred the Amatos from including the big guns of the repertoire among the half-dozen operas they produce every year. As a result, audiences sometimes need to stretch their imaginations, but there's never any question that a heart beats inside this vest-pocket theatre. (319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 7 at 7:30 and Sept. 8 at 2:30. Through Oct. 6.)

ORCHESTRAS

Curtis Chamber Orchestra—Mischa Santora conducts this ensemble of students from Philadelphia's Curtis Institute in Dvořák's Serenade for Strings; Mozart's E-Major Adagio (K. 261) and C-Major Rondo (K. 373), both featuring violinist Aaron Rosand; and the première of "Fragments for Strings" by the Swiss composer Matthias Truniger. Mr. Rosand will also be the soloist in Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata, as arranged for violin and string orchestra by Fritz Kreisler. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Sept. 9 at 8.)

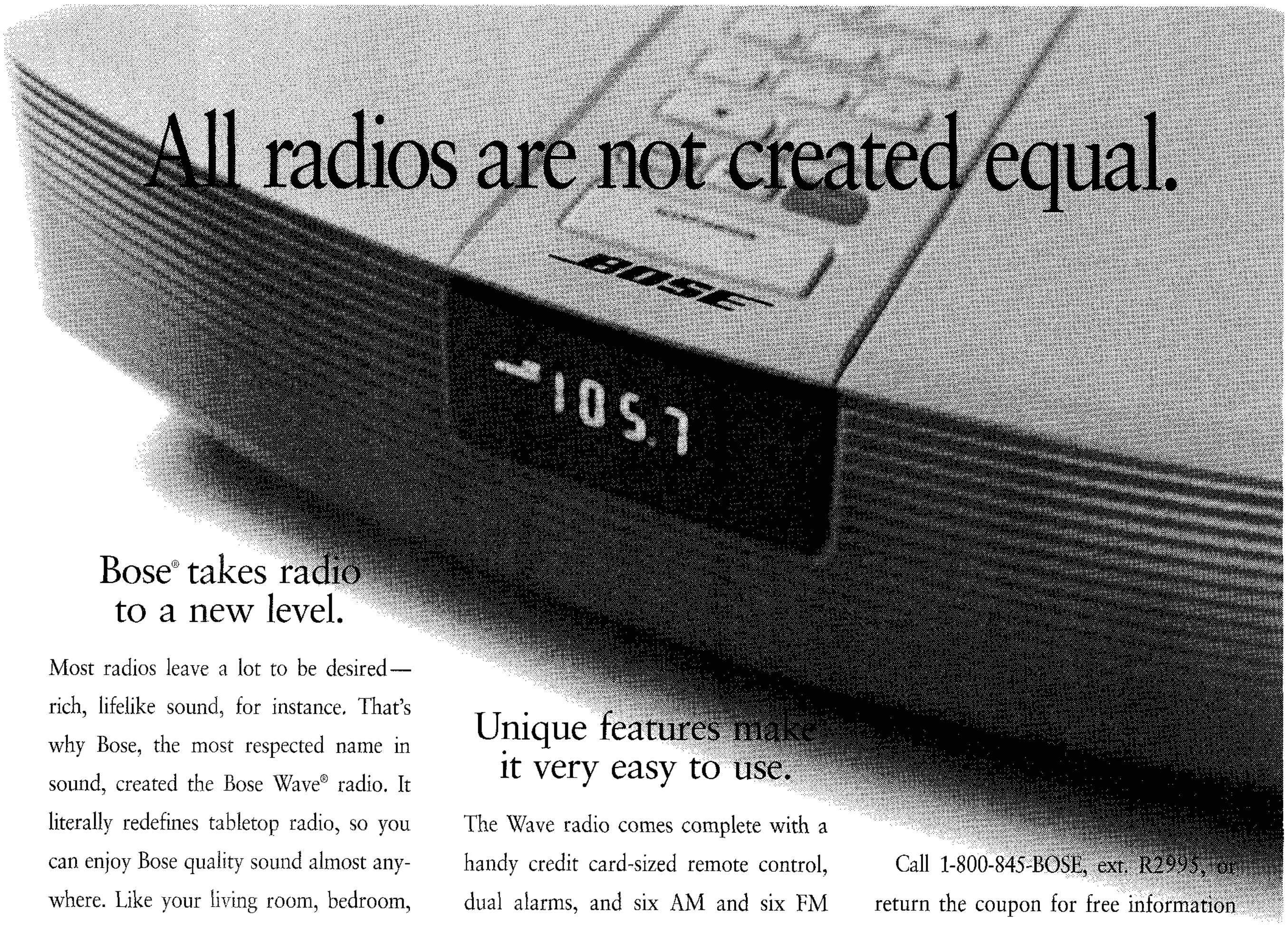
RECITALS

Bargemusic—Pianist Paige Roberts Hoffman performs Schumann's "Kreisleriana" and assists in Bach's G-Major Viola da Gamba Sonata (with violist Toby Hoffman), Debussy's Clarinet Rhapsody (with Alan R. Kay); all join for Mozart's "Kegelstaat" Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 5 at 7:30 and Sept. 8 at 4.)

SoHo Arts Festival—Several classical-music events figure in the festival's fourth season. Sept. 6 at 8:30: Chez Vees (an ensemble consisting of bass guitarist Jack Vees, oboist Libby Van Cleve, and electronic cellist Jeffrey Krieger) shares a program with Twisted Tutu (pianist Kathleen Supové and composer and performance artist Eve Beglarian). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 1 and 2:15: "Play It by Ear," an eight-member opera-improvisation troupe. . . . ¶ At 6: The Ahn Trio and tenor Michael Hendrick perform chamber music by Kenji Bunch, Eric Ewazen, Jeffrey Nytch, Leon Kirchner, and Brad Cresswell. . . . ¶ At 8: The Cassatt String Quartet offers music by Julia Wolfe, Eleanor Hovda, and Daniel S. Godfrey; Victoria Jordanova plays her own "Modules for Amplified Harp." (American Opera Projects, 463 Broome St. For information about tickets, call 431-8102.)

Sundays on the Island—Soprano Elizabeth Farnum and lutenist Joel Frederiksen present an all-English program that includes songs by Byrd and Purcell. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Sept. 8 at noon.)

The Queen's Chamber Band—This newly established eight-member group takes its name from the ensemble that Johann Christian Bach assembled in the seventeen-sixties, in London, for Queen Charlotte Sophia, wife of the mad king, George III. (Don't assume from the obeisance that this is a period-instrument group; it's not.) In its inaugural concert, the group offers a quintet by J. C. Bach and a set of English Renaissance vocal and instrumental pieces, but most of the program emanates from Italy, including concertos by Vivaldi and Benedetto Marcello, harpsichord sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, four of Monteverdi's "Scherzi Musicali," and an instrumental overture (actually an early specimen of the symphony) composed for performance during the Jewish festival of Hoshana Rabbah by Antonio Brioschi, who was active in Italy in the seventeen-thirties and -forties. (St. Peter's Church,



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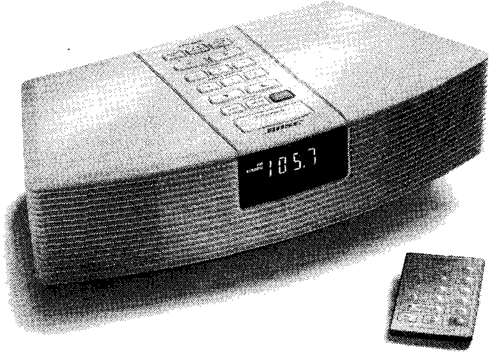

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Sept. 8 at 2. For information about tickets, call 932-9462.)

Robert Cassidy and Barbara Mort—The pianists join in a concert of four-hand works by Poulenc and Debussy, among others. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 8 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Daniele Lombardi—Performing piano works by composers active in the Parisian avant-garde of the nineteen-twenties: Albert Savinio, Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Stravinsky (his "Piano Rag Music"), Poulenc, Milhaud, and George Antheil (including his "Sonata Sauvage"); presented in conjunction with an exhibit of art works by Giorgio de Chirico, opening at Hunter College's Leubsdorf Art Gallery. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. No tickets necessary.)

YOU'RE OUTTA HERE!

As autumn approaches and it becomes safe again to venture out from your air-conditioned cocoon, the overnight getaway recedes as a weekend imperative. Here, then, a handful of expeditions—day trips and afternoon outings, for the most part—right in every New Yorker's back yard.

The Greens in Queens—New York City has hosted two World's Fairs in this century, in 1939-40 and again in 1964-65, both in a corner of Flushing which, prior to its rejuvenation for the earlier fair, was a dumping ground for the Brooklyn Ash Removal Company. (It was lamented as such in "The Great Gatsby": "This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens.") Today the site is Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, home to a zoo specializing in North American animals (pumas, sea lions, bears, elk); the New York Hall of Science, featuring kid-friendly interactive exhibits, including a curious installation inviting you to sniff the smells of rot (why anyone would want to is not explained); and the Queens Museum of Art. The biggest draw, though, has to be the scads and scads of green space: with dads manning barbecue grills and moms watching the little ones stumble by on in-line skates, the park has a pleasing touch of Americana—Latin Americana. Name another one where a vender is likely to have a roasted pig's head on display.

MARCELLUS HALL

Philosophers' Stones—Entering the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum (32-37 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City; 1-718 204-7088), you leave the sun's harsh glare for a dark, cool chamber that opens onto a sculpture garden where the walls are overgrown with ivy and birds chirp in the trees. There, among other works, stands "The Well," Noguchi's interpretation of the traditional Japanese *tsukubai*, though this is a fountain that disperses water rather than a vessel that collects it. Inside the museum proper, "Ding Dong Bat," fashioned from pink Portuguese and white statuary marble, resembles a cudgel inspired by Dr. Seuss. After a few sedate and calming hours, you can walk the block and a half north up Vernon Boulevard, past buildings of corrugated tin, to Socrates Sculpture Park, a four-and-a-half-acre lot on the East River which has the odd and oft-overlooked charm of the moderately ill-kempt—it's the sort of place where you find baseball cards strewn in the grass. The sculpture, by both local and international artists (the exhibits change twice a year), ranges from the hulking metal behemoth to the mixed-medium thingamajig (with a few representational pieces tossed in), and the atmosphere is that of a high-spirited free-for-all: some visitors stroll about admiring the work, others—primarily the younger set—climb on it.

Sloop Dreams—A cruise with Petrel Sailing (825-1976) into the waters off Battery Park is, simply put, one of those pleasures that make life worth living. While there are both lunch-hour and after-work sails (as short as forty-five minutes or as long as two hours), the crème de la crème is the moonlight cruise. The boat pulls away from the dock just before dusk, the city's glass and steel aglitter among a scatter of cream-green copper roofs. You can help the crew raise the mainsail or simply sit and enjoy the easy rocking of the craft, the found sculpture of the cranes along the Brooklyn shore, the red-and-yellow sunset (Hoboken never looked so good). Night brings the Statue of Liberty, sans tourists, glowing in postcard splendor from pedestal to torch. In the distance, the brightly twinkling Verrazano Narrows Bridge hints that there may be a reason to go to Staten Island. You take in the sound of the water lapping, the salt sea breeze, the silhouettes of seagulls flitting across the dark surface of the bay, and then, turning back, Manhattan again—a hundred sparkling boxes, a million brilliant lights.

East Coast Xanadu—There are any number of ways to reach Kykuit, the former Rockefeller family estate that is now maintained by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund as a museum. Perhaps the best mode of escape from the city's hustle is a New York Waterway ferry (1-800 533-3779) up the Hudson River to North Tarrytown. As you pass under the George Washington Bridge, Manhattan recedes and the Palisades loom ahead, a brilliant, verdant wall. Kykuit (Dutch for "lookout") is pretty much what you would expect from the Rockefellers—Tiffany glasswork, Chippendale furniture, sculpture and porcelains from the Tang, Ming, and Ching dynasties. The highlights are the gardens, chock-full of modern sculpture, and the view of the Hudson from the alcove room: a pearl-white Chinese bodhisattva in the foreground, the river blue and misty in the distance. (For reservations, which are required—often well in advance—call 1-914 631-9491.)

A Bronx Trail—"It is a great art to saunter," Henry David Thoreau advises in his journals. Perhaps better than any other site in the city, Wave Hill (Independence Ave. at W. 249th St., Riverdale; 1-718 549-3200), with its five greenhouses, eighteen acres of landscaped gardens, and ten-acre woodland provides the space—and the all-important ambience—required for the practice of this art. Wave Hill House, one of two residences on the estate, has been home to Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and Arturo Toscanini, among others. Today, as a city-owned cultural institution, the place offers programs in the visual and performing arts, horticulture, and land management. Still, the best thing about Wave Hill is its atmosphere and the freedom to amble in it without constraint or distraction. Headphones are required on radios, and there are no bicycles, Frisbees, or in-line skaters to dodge. You walk for a spell, then stop, sit, think, admire the ivy- and flower-draped trellises, maybe read a few pages, and ponder the strange smell of nature, reminiscent of post-church softball on the fellowship hall's front lawn.

Europass—A day at the Cloisters (923-3700) is like a quick trip abroad without all the hassles of currency exchange. Set in the bosky Fort Tryon Park, at the northern tip of Manhattan, this branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art focussing on the sculpture, stained glass, and tapestries of the Middle Ages takes its name from the portions of ancient monastic houses that form part of its structure. Early this century, these architectural elements were dismantled, brought here, and reassembled stone by stone—a means of propitiating, you might say, the twin gods of Capitalism and Extravagance. The museum provides a way for New Yorkers to enjoy medieval pleasures without all that monasticism; still, as you stroll beneath its calm arcades it's hard to dismiss a certain longing for a simpler era of God-given verities. The best tonic may be to perch on a balustrade along the Trie Cloister (which surrounds a garden filled with plants of the same varieties as those in the Unicorn Tapestries) and let the babbling of the water nourishing the beds lull you into a late-afternoon nap.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Blader, Dude—The New York City Skate Marathon will be twice as beholdable this year. Instead of blading for ten laps in Central Park, the site of the past four marathons, the country's top-ranked in-line skaters will convene in Brooklyn and circle Prospect Park a total of nineteen times. The shorter course—three miles and change, as opposed to the Central Park Loop's six miles—will double the spectators' opportunities to check out the race's surges and breakaways. Perennial contender Eddy Matzger, a California native who skates without the support of a team (and whose every breakaway is chased down by opposing teams), says that the shorter loop will increase the psychological difficulty of the three-hour, sixty-two-mile event (twice as many assaults on the park's big hill). "I'm also a little worried about the wind that blows in from the Coney Island direction near the Ocean Avenue entrance," he adds. "That's a stiff breeze to fight against." (The race begins near the Wollman Rink at 1:30, on Sept. 6. For more information, or to register for the thirty-mile amateur and intermediate races, call 465-3133.)

Readings—Sept. 5 at 7:30: To mark the eighty-fourth birthday of John Cage, friends and admirers of the late composer gather for a reading of his texts. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 7: Candace Gingrich, the younger sibling of the Speaker of the House, reads from her memoir, "The Accidental Activist." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 7: Jamie Lee Curtis reads her children's book, "Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 8: Novelists Louis Begley ("About Schmidt") and Rebecca Goldstein ("Mazel") read from their work. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Sept. 10 at 6: On the fiftieth anniversary of the trial of the Nazi doctors at Nuremburg, medical historian David Rothman evaluates such American experiments as government-sponsored radiation research and the hepatitis studies at Staten Island's Willowbrook State School for the Retarded. (New York Academy of Medicine, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. For more information, call 876-7271.) . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 6:30: Shamus William Stanton shows what it takes to become a bodyguard. (The Learning Annex, 116 E. 85th St. For more information, call 570-6500.)

Walks—Sept 8 at 1: Urban historian Val Ginter leads an expedition to the former San Juan Hill, and chronicles changes in the neighborhood since the construction of Lincoln Center. For more information, call the Municipal Art Society at 935-3960. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 1: John Muir, director of the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment, noshes through Little Odessa, sampling the cuisine of Brighton Beach's Russian enclave. For more information, call 1-718 788-8500.

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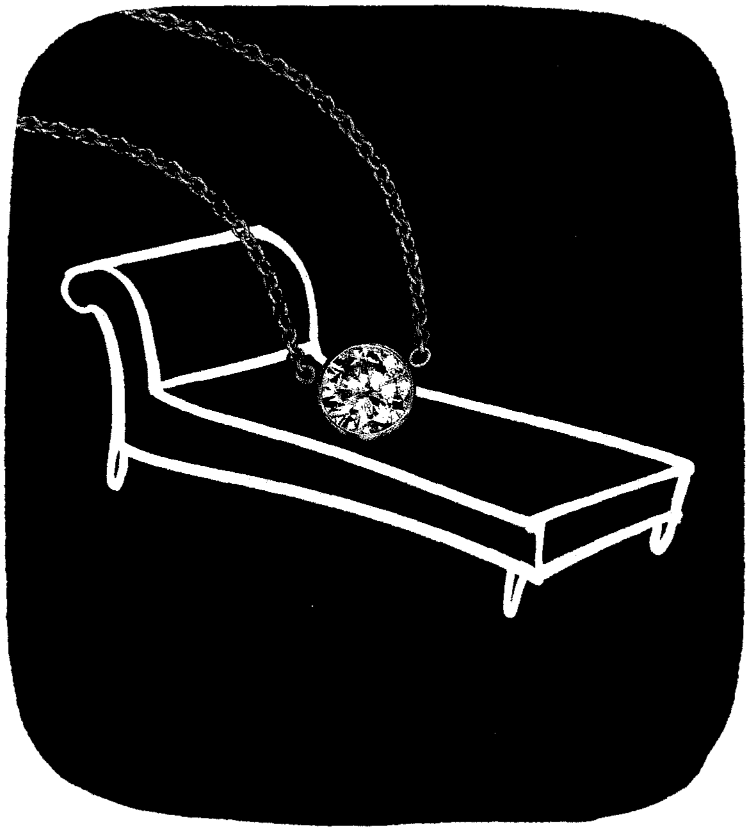

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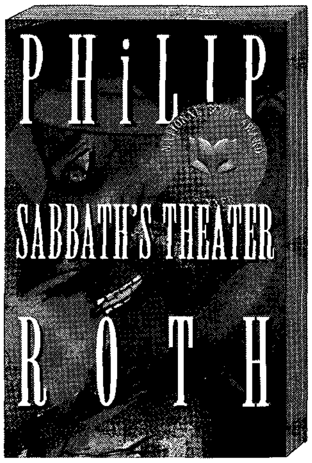

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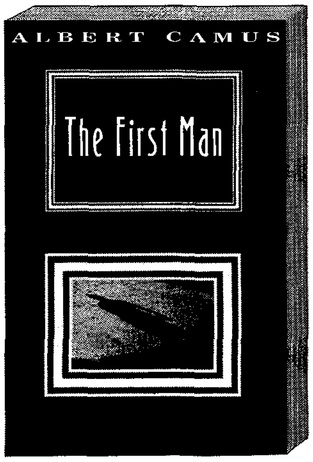

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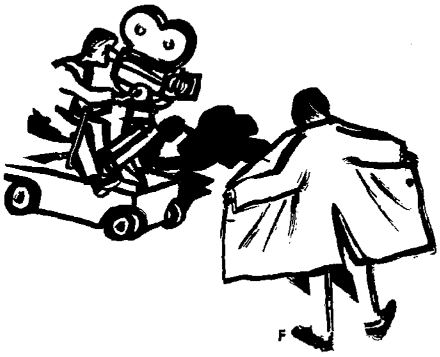
THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Big Squeeze—Peter Dobson, Danny Nucci, and Luca Bercovici compete for Lara Flynn Boyle and a large sum of money, in a film written and directed by Marcus De Leon. Opening September 6. (Regency and Village East Cinemas.)

Bogus—A foster mother (Whoopi Goldberg) finds that she must deal with her seven-year-old charge's imaginary friend (Gérard Depardieu). Directed by Norman Jewison. Opening September 6. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Gemini.)

Bulletproof—Former best friends—one (Adam Sandler) a crook, one (Damon Wayans) a cop—join forces to thwart both the mob and the police. Directed by Ernest Dickerson. Opening September 6. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, National Twin, and Orpheum VII.)

Ernesto Che Guevara: The Bolivian Diary—A Swiss documentary, drawn from the revolutionary's diary, covering the last eleven months of his life. Directed by Richard Dindo. In English and Spanish. Opening September 4. (Film Forum.)

Kids of Survival: The Art and Life of Tim Rollins and K.O.S.—A documentary by Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine, about an artist-teacher and his students in the South Bronx. Opening September 6. (Cinema Village.)

Maborosi—A young widow (Makiko Esumi) tries to come to terms with her husband's suicide, in a film adapted from a 1979 short story by Teru Miyamoto. Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda. In Japanese. Opening September 6. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 27.)

Basquiat—Making his début as a movie director, the painter Julian Schnabel offers a fond portrait of his fellow-artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, who died in 1988 from a heroin overdose—although, if this film is anything to go by, the cause of death was more likely an excess of celebrity in the bloodstream. Basquiat (Jeffrey Wright) went from a mock hobo existence to full-blown nineteen-eighties glamour without stopping at ordinary life, and it isn't hard to read his progress as a cautionary New York tale; the movie, however, is helplessly in love with him, and Schnabel never dreams of questioning his art. Still, if you want ironic distance you don't go to Julian Schnabel, and the picture's pleasures are mostly atmospheric—visionary surfers cruising the sky, Basquiat doodling in spilled syrup on a restaurant table. The film is best viewed as a freakish social comedy, its levity assured by a fine cast: the sweet-natured Wright, Benicio del Toro (forever strange) as Basquiat's best friend, and a suitably zonked David Bowie as Andy Warhol. (If you can't take the movie, buy the terrific, eclectic soundtrack instead.)—A.L. (8/19/96) (Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse.)

The Crow: City of Angels—Vincent Perez plays a young man who returns from the dead with remarkable powers, in a thriller directed by Tim Pope. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Emma—Douglas McGrath wrote and directed this charming, wrongheaded version of Jane Austen's great comedy of manipulation. Gwyneth Paltrow plays the heroine, and Jeremy Northam makes an absurdly young Mr. Knightley. He and Paltrow are a lovely couple, but McGrath replaces Austen's notion that love takes them by surprise—evolving, as it were, out of intellectual sparring—with easy romance. Ideal viewing for those who like to believe that Jane Austen was, above all, nice.—A.L. (8/5/96) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

First Kid—A comedy starring Sinbad as a Secret Service agent assigned to protect the President's teen-age son (Brock Pierce). Directed by David Mickey Evans. (Cinema II, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Cinemas, Guild, 23rd St. Triplex, and Village East Cinemas.)

Foxfire—Another muddled attempt to probe the raw, hitherto ignored lives of American girls. The plot spark this time is the arrival in a small town of Legs (Angelina Jolie), a teen-age tomboy with a criminal record and extraordinarily voluptuous lips, who helps four high-school girls experiment with breaking and entering and with hijacking and crashing a car. The girls are trying to escape a sexual-harasser coach and a gang-rape attempt, but their budding delinquency feels more like an imitation of boys' pranks than like an authentic response to their problems. The filmmakers keep urging them to think and speak for themselves, but everything the movie celebrates, from its juvenile us-vs.-them attitude to the flame tattoos that the girls carve on one another's breasts, smacks of conformism. Written by Elizabeth White, from the 1993 Joyce Carol Oates novel; directed by Annette Haywood-Carter.—S.K. (Art Greenwich Twin.)

Girls Town—Lili Taylor is an underachieving unwed mother, Bruklin Harris a poet stuck in a strict home, and Anna Grace a bright teen-ager toying with delinquency, in Jim McKay's low-budget but ambitious look at a neglected subject—the coming-of-age of adolescent girls. The three women worked together for months to create a casual documentary naturalness; unfortunately, the script they came up with (in collaboration with McKay and Denise Casano) is awfully literal in its take on the brutalization of young women in this country. The movie starts out as a meandering improvisational exercise for the diabolically talented Taylor and two other promising actresses; by the end, it's a p.c. melodrama.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center.)

Independence Day—The big summer alien-invasion movie, in which the German director Roland Emmerich delivers the populist message that the land of the free is still a scrappy, defiant, can-do country. Bill Pullman plays the Clintonesque President; Jeff Goldblum has the geek-elegant role of a cable-television technician turned scientific savior; Will Smith is a Marine fighter pilot who captures the first alien with a punch to the head. At the end, millions are dead and the battered survivors stand around grinning as if they've just won a volleyball game. This shallowness is scarier than anything in the movie. The film gives the audience what it craves: spectacular nothing.—J.W. (7/15/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Sutton, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

The Island of Dr. Moreau—John Frankenheimer's adaptation of H. G. Wells's 1896 novel, starring Marlon Brando as the scientist who crossbreeds human beings and animals. (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

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Jack—Francis Ford Coppola's cloying, vapid family film has Robin Williams playing a ten-year-old in a forty-year-old's body—he suffers from a mysterious malady that makes him age four times faster than other people. As if Williams's mugging and crying his way through two hours of a "Big" rip-off weren't enough, Coppola directs in a style so flat and unfocussed it's as though he had never left his trailer. This is hackwork—the dullest movie he's ever made.—B.D. (Embassy 3, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

Kansas City—Robert Altman's movie is set in the town where the director grew up—more specifically, in the jazz clubs that flourished there during the nineteen-thirties. Many of the usual Altman virtues are in evidence, not least the immaculate (though never pedantic) sense of period and the long, loosely knotted story line. An angry-looking broad named Blondie (Jennifer Jason Leigh) discovers that her husband, a petty crook, is being held by Seldom Seen (Harry Belafonte), a club proprietor and gangland chief. In retaliation, she kidnaps a politician's wife (Miranda Richardson) and drags her around the city, trailed by a small crowd of subplots. Belafonte offers a delicate demonstration of brute power, and the plot's mix of private obsession and grand political scheming should have been a winner. Unfortunately, the movie is killed by its two female leads—we ought to be rooting for them, but they seem to be involved in some twitch-and-frown competition of their own. It's a relief when they take a break and allow Altman to concentrate on the jazz; a frantic saxophone duel is the best thing in the film.—A.L. (8/19/96) (Baronet, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Opening September 6, Makiko Esumi in "Maborosi."

TERI SANDERS

Rendezvous in Paris—Eric Rohmer's new film is a characteristically elegant diversion, consisting of three short stories about young lovers in Paris. The movie follows these characters as they explore the inexhaustible city, each of them winding up, as Rohmer's people so often do, in a kind of romantic cul-de-sac. The seventy-six-year-old filmmaker has made it his peculiar business, over the years, to dramatize the pleasures of unconsummated love, and this picture demonstrates—in triplicate—that no one makes nothing happen more seductively. While Rohmer strolls through Paris, musing on the tricky interplay of chance and design, he's also pondering the erotic possibilities of melancholy: he somehow manages to turn a graceful urban travelogue into a witty, moving essay on pre-coital tristesse. With Clara Bellar, Antoine Basler, Aurore Rauscher, Serge Renko, Michaël Kraft, and Bénédicte Loyen. In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

She's the One—Writer-director Edward Burns follows up "The Brothers McMullen" with a film about two more brothers (Burns and Mike McGlone) and their troubles with women. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, 34th St. East, and Village East Cinemas.)

Small Faces—This vibrant film by the Scottish brothers Billy and Gillies MacKinnon (they collaborated on the screenplay, with Gillies directing) concerns the coming-of-age of three adolescent brothers involved with Glaswegian gangs in 1968. The camera work is grippingly intense, and the little-known actors give nuanced, startling performances. Despite a contrived happy ending, it's a wonder of a film.—B.D. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Solo—Mario Van Peebles stars as a high-tech cyborg soldier on the loose in Latin America, in an action film directed by Norberto Barba. (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gemini, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Spitfire Grill—An ex-con (Alison Elliott) takes a job as a waitress in a small Maine town, in a drama written and directed by Lee David Zlotoff. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Lincoln Square.)

Sweet Nothing—Michael Imperioli plays a young Bronx office worker who starts selling crack in order to help support the wife and kids, only to wind up a lowdown, lying user. This intelligent study is based on a real addict's diary; it's tightly, lovingly done, and Imperioli and Mira Sorvino (as his wife) strike just the right balance of fragility and obliviousness. Directed by Gary Winick, from a script by Lee Drysdale.—S.K. (Lincoln Square; starting Sept. 6.)

A Time to Kill—Joel Schumacher's Deep South courtroom thriller has the solemn tone of a Stanley Kramer social-problem drama. The script—by Akiva Goldsman, from a John Grisham novel—follows a young white lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) as he defends a black man (Samuel L. Jackson) accused of murdering a couple of rednecks. The movie inflates Grisham's modest, perceptive portrait of a Mississippi town into a smug lecture on race relations; what the hero and all the other sweat-soaked characters really need is central air-conditioning, but what they get is an overpowering blast of homiletic hot air. Also with Sandra Bullock and Kevin Spacey.—T.R. (7/29/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

Tin Cup—In Ron Shelton's romantic comedy, Kevin Costner plays a once promising golfer who now runs a seedy West Texas driving range. The appearance at the lesson tee of a witty, leggy psychotherapist (Rene Russo) rouses him from his cozy stupor of underachievement: the way to impress her, he decides, is to qualify for the U.S. Open, and win it. Costner gives a terrific comic performance, and Russo makes a wonderful sparring partner. The movie is relaxed, funny, unpredictable, and very sexy. The sensational supporting cast includes Cheech Marin, Don Johnson, and Linda Hart.—T.R. (8/12/96) (Coronet, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

TRAINSPOTTING—Why should people looking for a good time see a film about skinny, cynical heroin addicts in Edinburgh? Because the junkies themselves are having such a good time that what sounds grungy and depressing turns out to be weirdly uplifting. The performances feel driven and unashamed, and, though the film sells you short on plot, it makes you ravenous for the next visual fix. But in the end this approach becomes exhausting: you may yield to the film's verve while still praying that it will all be over soon. Directed by Danny Boyle; screenplay by John Hodge, from Irvine Welsh's novel.—A.L. (7/22/96) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

THE TRIGGER EFFECT—A thriller written and directed by David Koepp, about a suburban couple (Kyle MacLachlan and Elisabeth Shue) caught in the middle of a blackout. With Dermot Mulroney. (Art Greenwich Twin, East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and State.)

A VERY BRADY SEQUEL—Tim Matheson plays a thief who impersonates the dead first husband of Carol Brady (Shelley Long) in this second satire of the ludicrous TV series; it loosely re-creates such famous episodes as the family trip to Hawaii and the time Greg and Marcia set up their own far-out pad in the attic. As in the first movie, the cleverest jokes present the innocent Bradys as a strange tribe with exotic rituals, like back-yard potato-sack racing and bizarrely choreographed dancing; this time they are mistaken for everything from Jehovah's Witnesses to performance artists. There are, again, a few uncannily accurate moments—Gary Cole's imitation of Robert Reed's original Mike Brady, delivered in chipper, clipped inflections that suggest some sort of brain trauma, stands out—but the humor is less affectionate and a good deal more coarse. Mike and Carol spend a lot of time poking each other with carrots. Directed by Arlene Sanford.—S.K. (Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

WALKING AND TALKING—In Nicole Holofcener's fresh and accomplished début comedy, Catherine Keener plays Amelia, a thirtyish New Yorker; Anne Heche is her best friend, Laura, whose announcement that she's about to marry sends Amelia into a panic. Cinematically speaking, the movie is somewhat tame, but Holofcener's writing is trenchant and often hilarious, the actors are fine, and it's nice to see a movie about female friendship that doesn't stoop: at no point do the two women catfight over fame, money, or a man.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALASKA: Gemini and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **AVENTURERA:** Film Forum. . . . **CARPOOL:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **CELESTIAL CLOCKWORK:** 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **COURAGE UNDER FIRE:** Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **ERASER** (reviewed in our issue of 7/8/96): Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE FAN:** Criterion Center, Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **FLIRT:** Film Forum. . . . **THE FRIGHTENERS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE GREEN HOUSE:** Angelika 57 and Quad Cinema. . . . **HEAVY** (6/17/96): The Screening Room. . . . **HOUSE ARREST:** First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME** (7/8/96): Cinema 3rd Avenue and Embassy 4. . . . **JOHN CARPENTER'S ESCAPE FROM L.A.:** First & 62nd Cinemas and Waverly. . . . **KINGPIN** (8/5/96): Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LONE STAR** (7/8/96): Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse. . . . **MADAGASCAR SKIN:** Quad Cinema. . . . **MANNY & LO:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **MATILDA:** Gemini. . . . **MULTIPLICITY:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE NUTTY PROFESSOR** (7/8/96): National Twin. . . . **PURPLE NOON:** Paris. . . . **THE ROCK** (6/17/96): Embassy 4. . . . **STEALING BEAUTY** (6/10/96): Carnegie Hall Cinemas and First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **STRIPTEASE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE STUPIDS:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Waverly. . . . **SUPERCOP:** Embassy 2. . . . **TALES FROM THE CRYPT: BORDELLO OF BLOOD:** National Twin. . . . **TWISTER** (5/20/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE** (5/27/96): Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3. . . . **THE WIFE:** The Screening Room.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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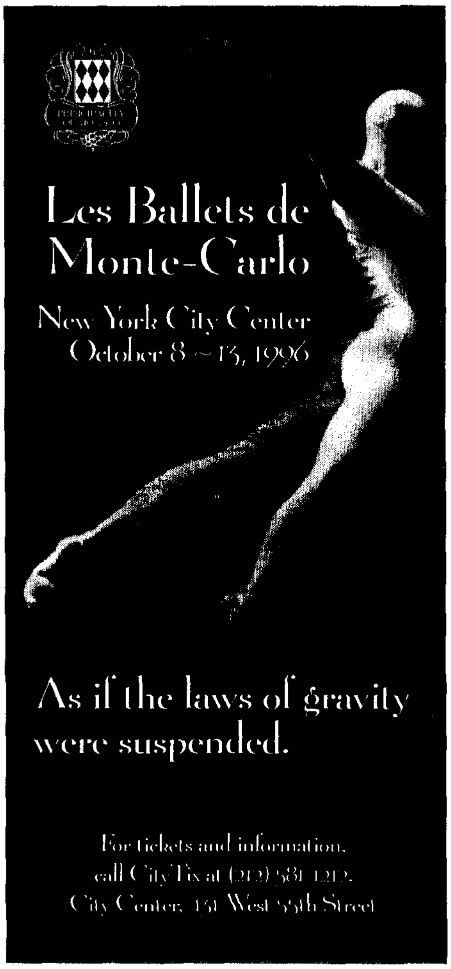
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th St.
ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
BARONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
CORONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY I, Broadway at 46th St.
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GEMINI, Second Ave. at 64th St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
MANHATTAN TWIN, Third Ave. at 59th St.
METRO CINEMA I AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NATIONAL TWIN, Broadway at 44th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St.
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON I AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd St.
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAVERLY I AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.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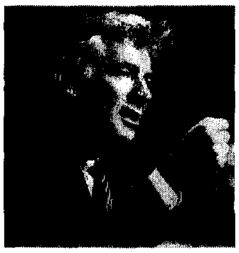

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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

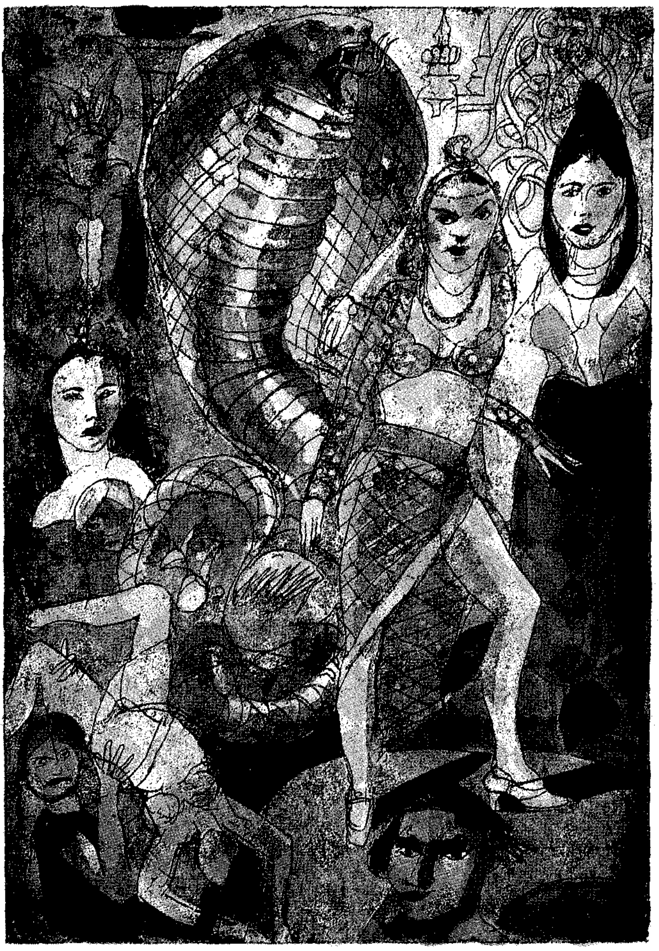
Carmen Jones (1954)—The setting of Bizet's "Carmen" has been changed from Mérimée's Spain to Jacksonville, Florida, and Meilhac's and Halévy's libretto has been rewritten by Oscar Hammerstein II, who provides colloquial, rather basic lyrics, but the music retains much of its excitement in this flamboyant version with an all-black cast. Dorothy Dandridge is a marvellous-looking Carmen—fiery and petulant, with whiplash hips in a hot-pink skirt. (Her singing is dubbed by Marilyn Horne.) The man Carmen destroys is played by Harry Belafonte, who seems miscast and miserable (he's also dubbed). Of the principals, only Pearl Bailey sings in her own voice—she comes up with a whacking rendition of the "Gypsy Song." Made from a hit Broadway musical, this movie is terribly uneven: best when it's gaudy and electric, worst in its more realistic staged melodramatic moments, especially toward the end. Directed by Otto Preminger; choreographed by Herbert Ross.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 6.)

Cobra Woman (1944)—Camp classic, with Maria Montez as voluptuous twins. She's the good Tollea, a South Seas girl who is kidnapped just as she's about to marry Jon Hall (who smiles his moony, Mona Lisa smile and looks as boneheaded as ever), and she's the evil High Priestess Nadja, who rules a tribe of snake worshippers on Cobra Island. The impeccably lifeless cast includes Sabu, Edgar Barrier, and Lon Chaney, Jr. Among the exotic treats: a rumbling volcano, a pet chimp, ominous gong sounds, forest-glade love scenes, human sacrifices, Nadja's handmaidens in their high-heeled pumps, her imperious writhing during what is supposed to be a demonic dance, and the good Tollea's plea for the symbol of the power that is rightfully hers, "Gif me the cobra jool!" Directed by that playful wit Robert Siodmak (on sets that are often parodistic).—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 10.)

Freaks (1932)—It's still a shocker. Though this circus story, directed by Tod Browning, is superficially sympathetic to the maimed and the mindless that it features, it uses images of physical deformity for their enormous potential of horror, and at the end, when the pinheads and the armless and legless creatures scurry about to revenge themselves on a normal woman, the film becomes a true nightmare. If this film were a silent it might be harder to shake off, but the naïve, sentimental talk helps us keep our distance.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 9.)

Murder by Contract (1958)—A cleanly constructed low-budget suspense picture about a hired killer (Vince Edwards). Shot in just eight days, it was directed by Irving Lerner, who was better known as an editor. The material is thin, but it has been worked out in visual terms, and the movie is often taut and exciting. Some high-contrast sequences are models of black-and-white atmospheric storytelling.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 8.)

Piranha (1978)—Fun if you go without high expectations—it's a satiric "Jaws" that mocks its predecessor even while blatantly ripping it off. The moviemakers recognize the humor of having lots of little teeth chomping swimmers after the audience has been conditioned to expect watery dining on a grander scale. Heather Menzies and Bradford Dillman play the intrepid duo who inadvertently unleash a mutant breed of the killer fish, developed by a mad scientist (Kevin McCarthy) for use in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War. In scrappy set pieces, like the fishes' deadly sabotage of a tube race at a summer camp, the movie exhales an anything-goes desperation; but devotees of high-spirited schlock won't mind its descent into a different kind of camp. The cast includes Keenan Wynn, Dick Miller, and Barbara Steele; Joe Dante directed (and co-edited, with Mark Goldblatt); John Sayles wrote the script.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 7.)



At Film Forum 2, Maria Montez in "Cobra Woman."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

The Shooting (1967)—Monte Hellman was the director; Carol Eastman, who later wrote "Five Easy Pieces," did the enigmatic script. Millie Perkins, on horseback, is searching for something unspecified in the desert; she has a gunman riding behind her, on a leash. The cast includes Jack Nicholson, Warren Oates, and Will Hutchins. They use a dialect that may be authentic to something but is largely indecipherable. To lift from Henry James, Monte Hellman asks a lot for the little he gives.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 8.)

Targets (1968)—Peter Bogdanovich wrote, directed, and appears in this lame melodrama about a clean-cut all-American boy (Tim O'Kelly) who turns sniper. The picture is rather naïvely made, and one begins to wait for the sniper to hit his targets, because there's nothing else of interest going on. Boris Karloff, in one of his last screen appearances, plays a veteran horror-film actor.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 8.)

Torn Curtain (1966)—A sloppy, clumsy Hitchcock thriller, with Paul Newman as an American nuclear scientist who says he's defecting, and Julie Andrews as the girl who tags along—pure heart, piping voice, and all. Brian Moore is credited with the original screenplay, but probably his friends don't mention it.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 9.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Sept. 4: "Something's Happening: The Hippie Revolt" (1967, Edgar Beatty) and "Psychedelic Sexualis" (1966, Albert Zugsmith). . . . Sept. 5-7: "The Tingler" (1959, William Castle). . . . Sept. 8: "The Incredibly Strange Creatures" (1964, Ray Dennis Steckler) and "Monstrosity" (1963, Joseph V. Mascelli). . . . Sept. 9: "Freaks" (†) and "The Unknown" (1927, Tod Browning). . . . Sept. 10: "Cobra Woman" (†) and "Wild Women of Wongo" (1958, James Wolcott).

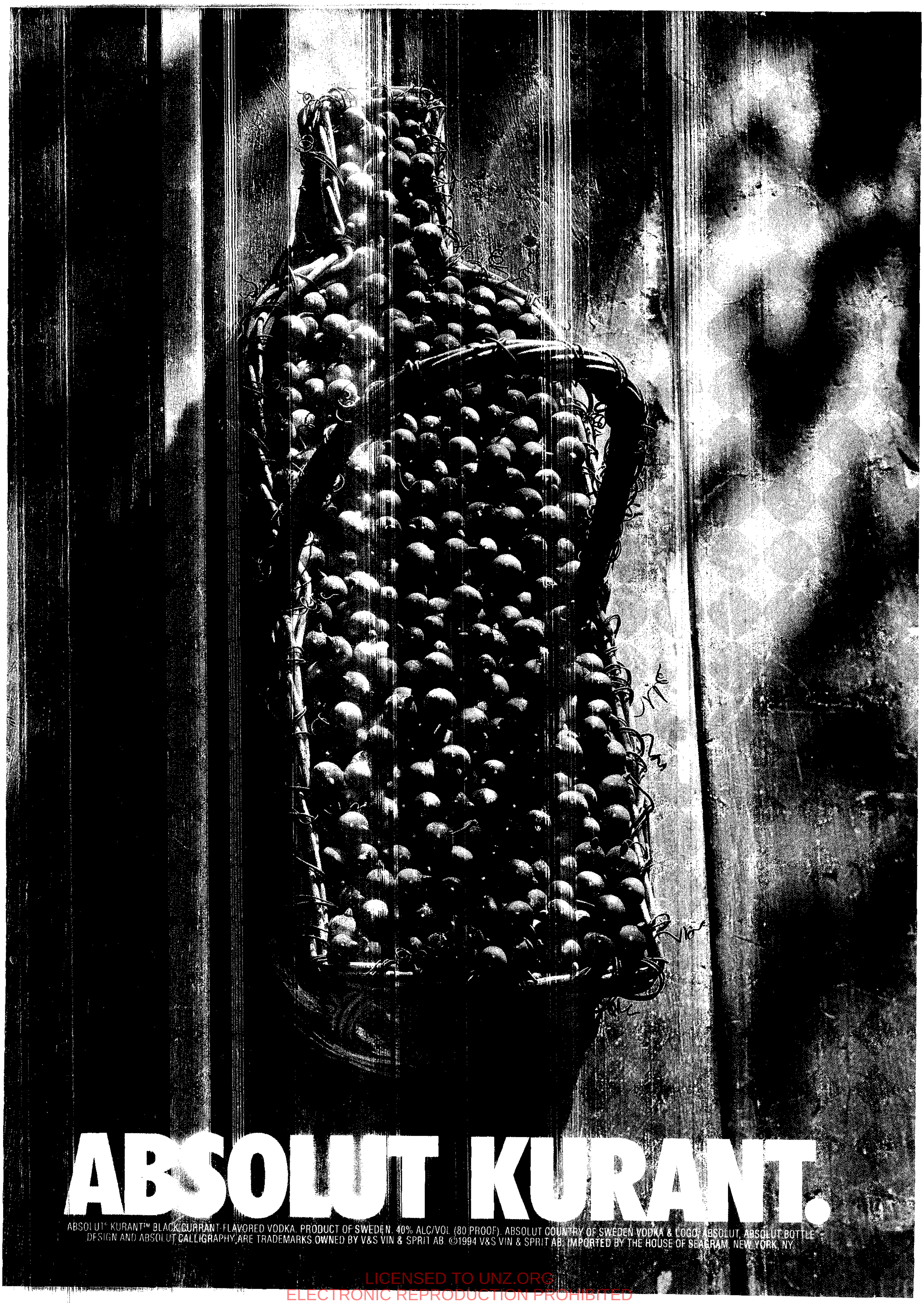
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A showing of films from the museum's Martin Scorsese Collection. Sept. 5 at 2:30: "El Cid" (1961, Anthony Mann). . . . Sept. 5 at 6: "Demetrius and the Gladiators" (1954, Delmer Daves). . . . Sept. 6 at 2:30: "The Agony and the Ecstasy" (1965, Carol Reed). . . . Sept. 6 at 6: "Carmen Jones" (†). . . . Sept. 6 at 8 and Sept. 10 at 6: "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray). . . . Sept. 7 at 2 and Sept. 10 at 2:30: "Pete Kelly's Blues" (1955, Jack Webb). . . . Sept. 7 at 5: "A Kiss Before Dying" (1956, Gerd Oswald). . . . Sept. 8 at 2: "Wind Across the Everglades" (1958, Ray). . . . Sept. 8 at 5: "Murder by Contract" (†). . . . Sept. 9 at 2:30: "Pay or Die" (1960, Richard Wilson). . . . Sept. 9 at 6: "Torn Curtain" (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Sept. 4 at 2 and Sept. 8 at 4: "The Decline of Western Civilization" (1981, Penelope Spheeris). . . . Sept. 4 at 4:15 and Sept. 5 at 6: "D.O.A.: A Right of Passage" (1981, Lech Kowalski) and "Punking Out" (1977). . . . Sept. 4 at 6:45, Sept. 6 at 7:45, and Sept. 10 at 4: "Eric Clapton & Queen: The BBC Concerts" (1975 and 1977). . . . Sept. 4 at 9 and Sept. 7 at 5:30: "Rock on Granada TV: Whole Lotta Shakin' " (1964) and "The Little Richard Special" (1964). . . . Sept. 5 at 8:30: Filmmakers D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus will discuss their work. . . . Sept. 6 at 5:30: "Rust Never Sleeps" (1979, Bernard Shakey). . . . Sept. 6 at 10 and Sept. 7 at 7:30: "Listening to You: The Who at the Isle of Wight Festival" (1996, Murray Lerner). . . . Sept. 7 at 9:15 and Sept. 8 at 6:15: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Rolling Stones" (1974, Rollin Binzer). . . . Sept. 8 at 2 and 8:15: "Welcome to the Fillmore East" and "Allman Brothers Band at the Fillmore East" (1970, David Acomba). . . . Sept. 9 at 2 and 6:30: "The Life and Times of the Red Dog Saloon" (1996, Mary Works). . . . Sept. 9 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Sept. 10 at 2: "Cracked Actor" (1974) and "Talking Heads vs. the Television" (1981, Geoff Dunlop). . . . Sept. 10 at 8:30: "Wild Style" (1983, Charlie Ahearn).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Sept. 7 at 2: "Roger Corman: Hollywood's Wild Angel" (1978, Christian Blackwood). . . . Sept. 7 at 3:15: "Caged Heat" (1984, Jonathan Demme). . . . Sept. 7 at 5: "Piranha" (†). . . . Sept. 8 at 2: "The Shooting" (†). . . . Sept. 8 at 4: "Targets" (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—From Sept. 5: An eleven-day festival of sixty-six international independent films.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films. On Sept. 8 at 7, the feature will be "Funny Girl" (1968, Herbert Ross).



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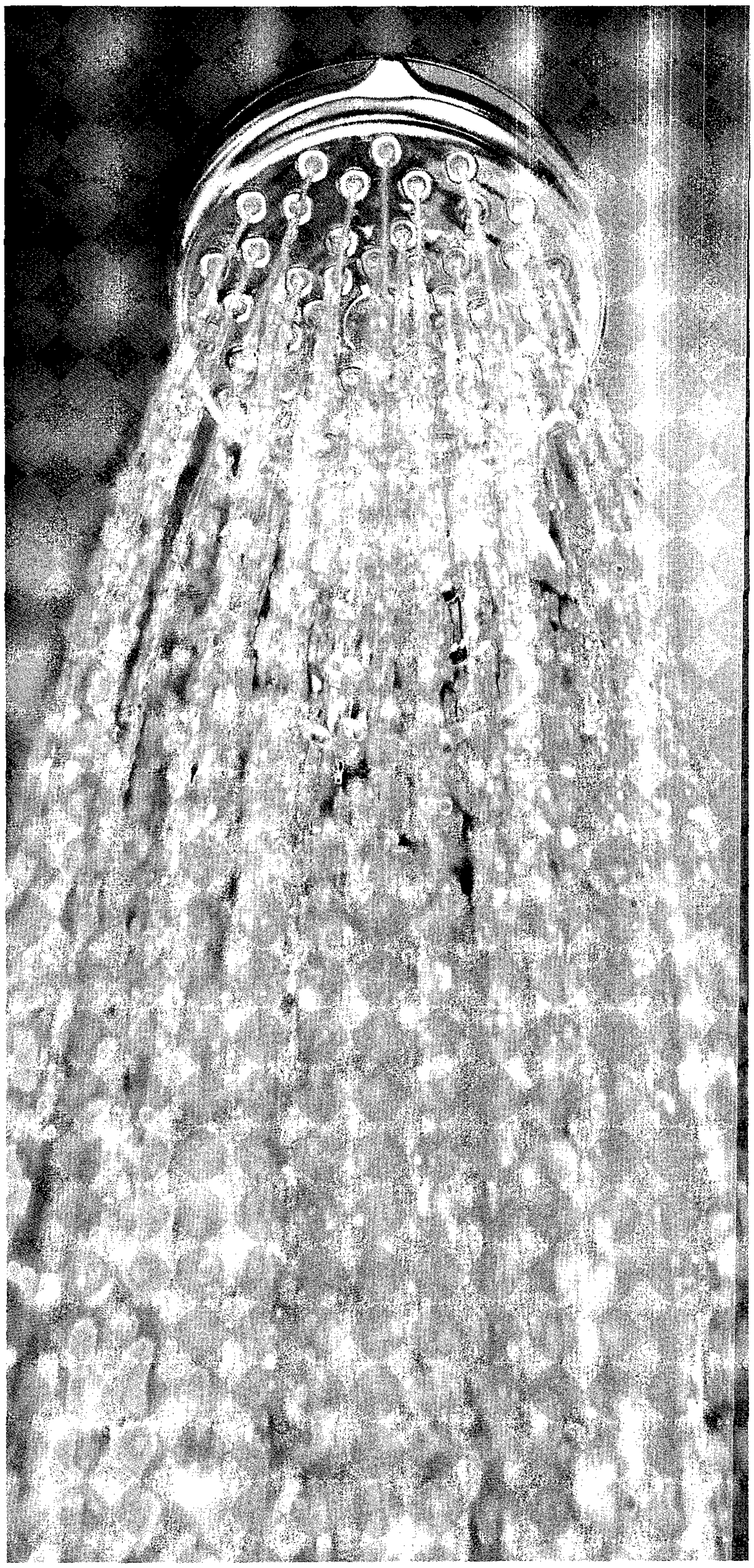

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

TOE JAM

"NOW we know," went the gallows one-liner at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago last Thursday, "what that giant sucking sound was that Ross Perot described in 1992." It goes without saying that the joke referred to President Clinton's principal political strategist, Dick Morris, who had resigned that morning after being described by a prostitute in a tawdry tabloid exposé as a longtime client and a devotee of toe-sucking.

Disagreeable though the news was for President Clinton and his team, it brought unmistakable glee to a press corps that had until that point been forced to content itself with little more than its own favorite form of oral gratification: thumb-sucking—in this case, about the newslessness of Presidential nominating conventions. There was a palpable sense of euphoria, too, among certain political insiders who had believed that Morris's self-destruction was only a matter of time, given the nature of his narcissism in a profession notably inhospitable to hubris. "He's a man without a country," one colleague remarked. "He'd better join a witness-relocation program, because so many people would like to put a hit on him."

While family values and their generally accepted incompatibility with prostitution were the issues at hand, Morris's greater mistake may have been the violation of a subtler but equally unforgiving code: the so-called Deaver Rule, named for Michael Deaver, the former Reagan adviser, whose downfall was also preceded by a self-promotional appearance on the cover of *Time*, surrounded by the trappings of money and power. The Deaver Rule holds that no factotum—however close to power—can afford to become more conspicuous than the elected official he serves. It was this code that claimed the career of another former Reagan adviser, Ed Rollins, after he boasted about his strategy to hold down the black vote in the election campaign of Christine Todd Whitman for the governorship of New Jersey. Earlier still, it was this axiom that made targets of Jimmy Carter's advisers Jody Powell and Hamilton Jordan after they posed on the cover of *Rolling Stone* dressed as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Not only had Morris appeared on the cover of last week's *Time* perched on the shoulder of the President (a photomontage that the White House tried to kill); he had also sought attention in other ill-advised ways, brokering "exclusive" interviews with publications such as *USA Today*, reportedly entertaining a potential book deal, and starring in a frenetic round of media background briefings accompanied by an entourage of assistants. His rendition of campaign analyses was so dazzling, according to witnesses, that it left many journalists more impressed by Morris than they were by Clinton. Recently, he told friends that he was the most influential Presidential adviser of this century.

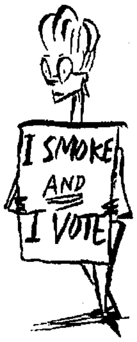
Even after the news of Morris's dangerous liaison broke, one confidant said, a tearful Morris "seemed to be rationalizing it, focussing on having been set up." Meanwhile, the country was left to reflect that only inside the Beltway do johns try to impress call girls with proposed drafts of campaign speeches. The Convention last week may have been devoted to eschewing the political in favor of the personal, but if the *Star* is to be believed, even at his most personal Morris was always first and foremost political.

THE KIDS ON THE BUS

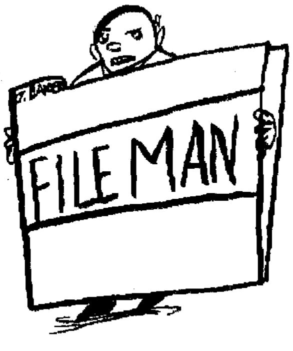
FARAI CHIDEYA is not exactly the Cokie Roberts type. She is a twenty-seven-year-old black woman with elaborately braided hair and a downtown demeanor that, as she puts it, "exudes non-mainstream vibes." She

CHICAGO NOTEBOOK

Tom Bachtell sketches the Democratic Convention.



A man in an unwieldy costume said, "Maybe the White House has your files."



DEPARTING

IN Wellfleet, on Cape Cod. A piercing-blue sky, gentle ocean breeze, low humidity, clean air. But what Seamus Heaney has called "the ache of summer" is increasingly palpable. Darkness will clamp down earlier and more suddenly this evening—one moment a rich, haunting Maxfield Parrish blue, the next pitch-black and night. Hard to face, but wouldn't you know, summer is ending and it is time for memories. Last year, the infants crawled and babbled, this year walked and talked, expressed ideas. Their fathers, brothers in their forties, not having got together for a year, fell upon each other like wild kids, pummelling themselves back into their pasts. As sage, I stood and observed with a comforting yet bittersweet sense of posterity.

And now the depressing thought of packing. Dragging the suitcases down from the attic, clump, clump. Which shirts should stay the long winter, which should head for city soot and the Chinese laundry? Certainly, some of the oils by friends and local artists must go back with us, especially the picture of a child's broken high chair, by the late Mary Hackett, of Provincetown, a painter fools might label "primitive" but whom those with eyes to see recognize as great.

What will be most missed? Those early-morning walks along unmarked sandy roads, past pitch pine being overtaken by climaxing oak, each walk a venture along undiscovered paths. Suddenly, one comes upon a shack in the woods, never before noticed, or an ancient roadside mileage marker, an arrowhead, a gentle snake. When one looks up, there is a bald eagle, rare, swooping and filling the glimpse of sky.

I will miss the bustling public library, brain center of the village (winter pop. 3,015, summer pop. circa 15,000), lectures, concerts, readings, expertly managed with a vestigial New England respect for learning. The local grocery, Lema's, has a permanent pervading odor of appetite: part vinegar, part scallion, part salami, part old wooden floorboards. And Charlie, the Scots butcher, always slicing, chopping off the fat, and singing, bagpipelike, songs of the Old Country. And Bayside Lobster Hutt, a scene of pure Bruegel: long wooden tables, whole families pigging out, cracking shells, dipping claws and tails into melted butter.

I will not miss the incessant, speeding, dangerous traffic on Route 6, the main artery connecting the Cape with the mainland. And beach picnics are a mixed blessing. There are elements of perfection—the expanse of beach, the pounding surf, the small, gleaming fires, the old friends gathered—but sand creeping into hot dogs, gumming up the relish, and clinging to the corn is not what the fancier places now call Cuisine Nouvelle New England.

Night is falling. There is a chill in the air. Winter will come. And go.

—PHILIP HAMBURGER

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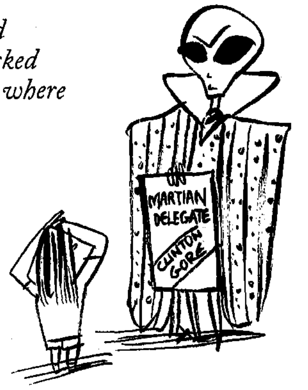
has been working as a political commentator for CNN only since last February, but, by the time the Republican and Democratic Conventions rolled around, Chideya had become a fixture: opining on each night's wrapup, bantering with Bernard Shaw, and trading sound bites with David Broder—and along the way winning over some serious (and seriously powerful) skeptics in the CNN hierarchy. "At first, I was against it," Ed Turner, CNN's executive vice-president, says. "At that age, what do you have to say? But I changed my mind."

Unusual as Chideya's ascent seems, it is actually the next logical step in a process that began in 1992, when MTV (where Chideya was working when CNN poached her) injected some Gen X flavoring into that year's campaign coverage. This development was itself part of a broader change that has been going on for twenty years, as the influx of women and minorities into political journalism has shredded the white, male, middle-aged portrait of the 1972 press corps painted in Timothy Crouse's classic "The Boys on the Bus." Now, it seems, the one corner of the profession left largely undisturbed by all this diversification is being invaded as well: the punditocracy.

It's hard, actually, to imagine anyone more naturally suited to lead this charge than Chideya, who not only embodies virtually all the demographic shifts of the past two decades but also has all the qualities of a born pundit. Her poise is substantial, her capacity for talk is apparently limitless, and her opinions are strong and plentiful. "Objectivity is a shield for ignorance," she says. She has already written a book ("Don't Believe the Hype," about media-abetted myths concerning blacks) and is at work on another ("The Color of America," about what may happen as the nation comes to have no racial majority), and she is not shy about self-promotion. In Chicago and San Diego, she could be found handing out postcards, adorned with a photo of herself, advertising "Pop & Politics," the site she recently launched on the World Wide Web. "I am, I guess, my own cottage industry," she says with a grin.

Though Chideya knows that her race and her gender have in some respects helped her career, she thinks that CNN wanted her mainly for her generational appeal, and, judging by the sudden boom in youth punditry, she is probably right. The splashiest example, of course, is the new MSNBC network, which, after auditioning seemingly every young political writer in Washington and New York, picked a handful of them to appear frequently in various pundit ensembles—a sort of "Friends" meets "The McLaughlin Group" approach. There is Fox's impending all-news cable network, which will be, as the argot has it, "skewed young." And even the comparatively staid CBS has hired the steel-edged thirtyish conservative Laura Ingraham to hold forth in the airtime once filled by Joe Klein.

"Don't get too carried away—old white men in suits still dominate the hot-air business," Howard Kurtz, the Washington *Post's* media writer, says. "But the networks are finally waking up



A concerned Martian asked a little girl where her parents were.

to a large demographic reality, which is that a lot of younger people don't watch news on TV."

The question, however, is whether the solution to that problem is more Chideyas. The lack of interest in traditional news sources among young viewers (and readers) has reached a fairly advanced stage; increasingly they are drawn to alternatives like the Internet, to the extent that they are drawn at all. It is doubtful that a collection of less wrinkly talking heads will turn this situation around, especially when, as Kurtz points out, "with most of these younger commentators, if you switched off the picture, the sound would be very much like the same conventional wisdom dished out by their older counterparts."

Chideya plans to explore the issue more formally this fall, when she takes up a Freedom Forum fellowship to study why young people are tuning out the news. The answer, she suspects, is that too many stories speak about Gen X without knowing how to speak *to* it. "Having young reporters and commentators may not be the whole solution, but it's part of the picture," she says. "Because I'm a black woman who's young, I'm more likely to think about issues that affect black people, young people, and women."

Of course, thinking about such issues and having an opportunity to speak about them on TV are two quite different things, as Chideya has learned in the course of the campaign. "More and more, and especially at the Conventions, the stuff we've been talking about has focussed on politics in general and not youth-oriented issues. I try to flick in youth stuff when I can, but you only have a few seconds, and it's hard to do if the question is about the horse race." In the news business, demography may be destiny, but the medium remains the message.

UNDER THE BIG TENT

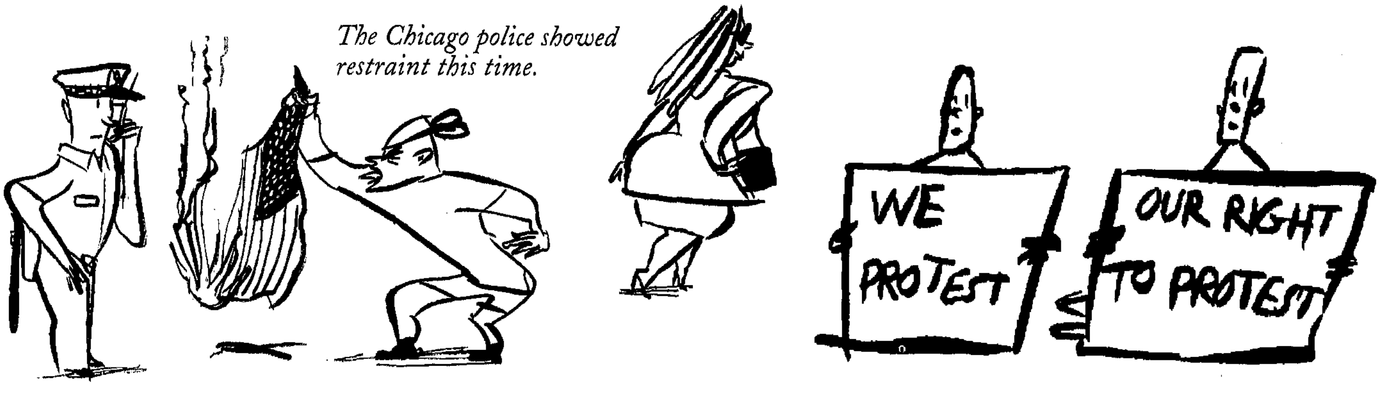
DERMATOLOGISTS, Shriners, and members of the Modern Language Association convene to compare specialized notes, dress up, and read papers, and the members of our major political parties seem to have put aside the illusion that the purpose of their gatherings is very much different. Participation in these affairs has evolved into its purest form: conventioneering.

To the immense annoyance of the press and other spectators, the Conventions now consist of huge quasi-fraternal organizations (Republicans in San Diego, Democrats last week in Chicago) whose members enjoy getting together, catching up with one another, and arguing about the very souls of their great, historic, family-oriented, American-dreaming groups. Like the gatherings of, say, the American Bar Association or the National Rifle Association, these meetings are accompanied by an immense trade show at which just about everyone who has something to say (or to sell) sets up a table or announces a meeting or attempts to pass along an idea. Last week, Michael Lerner brought his "politics of meaning" road show to town, while the rotund Tony Blankley, the press secretary to Speaker Newt Gingrich, stood by the media pavilion behind the United Center in Chicago and said that Clinton had no issues to run on. "He's running on being an ingratiating fellow," Blankley told one listless group of reporters.

If the celebrants in San Diego and Chicago had been dentists, there would have been booths demonstrating innovations in high-speed drills. In Chicago, there were book signings—on one day, at one hotel stand, by Jesse Jackson, James Carville, and Roger Clinton, the President's younger brother, who seemed to bond instantly with everyone who stopped by, even those unwilling to fork over twenty dollars for "Growing Up Clinton." (Roger Clinton had made an earlier, street-corner appearance with Clarence Clemons, the great saxophonist, and said, with a Clintonesque grin, that the two had earned three dollars and thirty-five cents.) On another morning, in a ballroom, Senator Barbara Mikulski, the tiny Maryland Democrat, signed her new novel and was upstaged only when Senator Edward M. Kennedy stopped by, followed by cameras, apparently with nothing to sell or to sign.

This is very, very far from what the journalist-historian Mark Sullivan once described as "the reactions of men to sudden and unexpected crises on the Convention floor, the play of human psychology, individual and mass." Yet, unlike accountants and plumbers, Democrats and Republicans still have Convention habits that they cannot get rid of—namely, thrashing about on an overcrowded floor, part of a curious rite in which a magical leader will suddenly descend from the clouds (as President Clinton did, via helicopter) or be introduced as "the chieftain of our village" (as Hillary Rodham Clinton was when she stopped by last Wednesday morning to speak to the Black Caucus). At least these modern men and women covered with buttons and wearing loony hats (some measured eighteen inches tall and had an audible Uncle Sam) stopped short of dropping water balloons from hotel windows. Instead, they chose, in a formal sense, someone who will become an American President. ♦

"Toe Jam," Jane Mayer; "The Kids on the Bus," John Heilemann; "Under the Big Tent," Jeffrey Frank.


The Chicago police showed restraint this time.

THE POLITICAL SCENE

GLASSHOUSE CONVENTIONS

How the parties built their pretty façades—and why they're so fragile.

BY MICHAEL KELLY

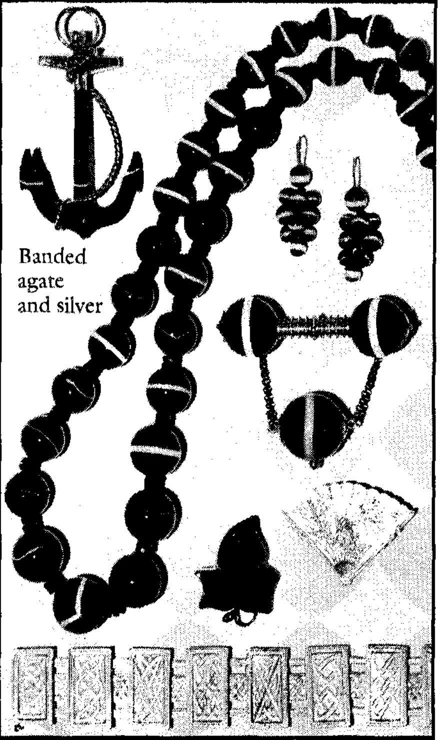
THE news that President Clinton's chief political strategist had resigned following a tabloid accusation of a prolonged dalliance with a call girl, arriving as it did on the day the President was to glide to triumph at the most serene Democratic National Convention in history, carried a great shock of the real. As it happened, 1996 has been the year when Dick Morris and his fellow-operators—the consulting class that has come to run national politics—finally succeeded in the goal of effecting an utter disconnection between form and function in both the Democratic and the Republican National Conventions. They had created Conventions that, like the Roman Senate after Augustus Caesar, retained the form of a deliberative body, but only for the purpose of providing a structure within which to frame a spectacle—the spectacle of a deliberative body at work. As in Rome, though, this spectacle could succeed only if the body did not actually deliberate—did not engage in or exhibit the real behavior of politics. The consultants had determined that real politics and real politicians were profoundly unattractive, especially to the people both parties believed constituted the critical mass of the swing vote between them: women—more particularly, married white women, most of them living in the suburbs, a majority of them with children, and many of them Catholic.

Aretha Franklin in Chicago. The cognitive dissonance between the spectacle of the family-hour Conventions and the business of politics was deafening.

DAVID BURNETT/CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

The planners of both parties constructed Conventions that, at least in prime network-television time, were designed to address this target audience's concerns (community, safety, stability, above all family) in terms that the audience was believed to respond to (compassion, sentiment, unity, and tolerance, as opposed to logic, competition, toughness, and moral judgment), and to address them through dramatis personae with whom this audience was believed to identify (mothers, sons, daughters, wives, celebrities, regular folks, as opposed to the Great Men who presided over the rostrums of Conventions past).

The two Conventions, it was widely observed, were essentially television programs. They were designed by the same sort of market research which guides programming decisions. They were scripted on the basis of the assumptions that govern the scripting of the "Today" show or "Good Morning America": that very few people will watch a program in its entirety



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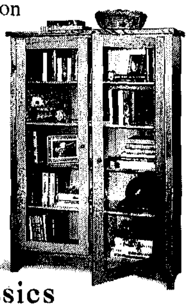

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(that, in fact, the average viewer will watch only between twenty and thirty minutes), and that even a small patch of boring TV will, in the age of the remote-control switch, lose multitudes of viewers. They were produced and directed by professionals in the televised-spectacle line, the same folks who in non-Presidential years turn out Super Bowl halftime shows and Radio City Music Hall pageants and Tony Awards programs.

In the end, these two prime-time shows—miniseries, actually—were not so much Conventions as collections of human-interest stories set against the backdrop of Conventions, in the same way that NBC's packaging of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games was not so much the presentation of a sporting event as a collection of human-interest stories set against the backdrop of a sporting event. They told stories about sick little black girls and crippled handsome movie stars and brave wounded policemen and sisters who died of cancer and teachers who made a difference and strong, loving mothers and immigrant fathers who believed in the American Dream. With a few notable exceptions (the speeches of Colin Powell and Bob Dole and Jesse Jackson), they eschewed argument, avoided oratory, skirted conflict, elided differences. Such things are matters of politics—real politics—and these shows were not about that. They were about family.

By and large, up until the moment the Morris story broke, the Convention shows worked as planned. In four days in San Diego, the Republican show succeeded in redefining both the Party (tolerant, inclusive, compassionate, moderate) and the candidate (decent, modest, thoughtful, moral but not moralistic) to a point where, for the first time in months, people began to talk cautiously about the possibility of a Dole victory in November. And in Chicago last week the Democratic show was having a similarly beneficent effect. The Chicago story line was as simple and as wholesome as it could be, and was aimed unwaveringly at the suburban married mother: the Democrats were the true party of family, and Bill and Hillary Clinton were the good mother and the good father. They were to be trusted with the future of the children. They were socially conservative but deeply compassionate. They were above politics. They were moral—motivated not by any desire for personal gain but by a desire to do good for the people. The questions that had been raised about their characters stemmed from the vicious attacks of those who, in the blackness of their hearts, did not wish the people to prosper. They were not the Clintons of draft avoidance and Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones and Whitewater and the rest. They were the Clintons of the New Democratic promise, who were fulfilling the hopes of a plurality of voters in 1992.

More than any other person except, perhaps, Clinton himself, Dick Morris was responsible for this careful restoration of Clinton's image and of Clinton's Party's image to the promise of 1992. The themes of the 1996 Convention were the themes Morris had fashioned in the successful bid to resurrect the President after the debacle of the 1994 elections. "This was the family-values Convention, and that was all Dick's doing," a Clinton adviser said on the afternoon of Morris's downfall. "Every speaker at this Convention gave Dick's speech—all the speakers just gave their own versions of it. Basically, it was the Clinton '92, New Covenant speech, but it was because of what Morris did that they all toed the line and gave that speech this year."

This is the context in which the news of Morris's purported yearlong liaison with a tell-all prostitute fell, and the shock it caused was the shock of realizing how fragile the whole edifice was—how vulnerable a story line of so many months' creation was to a single intrusion of the unconstructed reality of the political world. "It takes a village, all right," one bitter Democratic strategist said. "A village with a whorehouse in it."

To understand how these odd new Conventions came about, it helps to spend time with the Conventions' nonpersons: the activists who were there but not there, disallowed before the cameras in the hall and banished to a sort of penumbra of honesty—a zone of hotel ballrooms and open-air rallies where the ideas and passions that actually animate the parties' cores were given their only free vent.

San Diego: It is a lovely day at Sea World, and the Republican National Coalition for Life's Whale of a Party is in full swing, which is a pretty restrained sort of swing. The bar is forlorn for lack of customers, but the crowd around the pastry table is three deep. The leaders of the Republican right are all here: Phyllis

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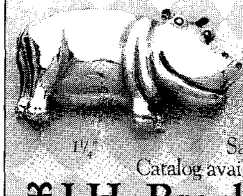

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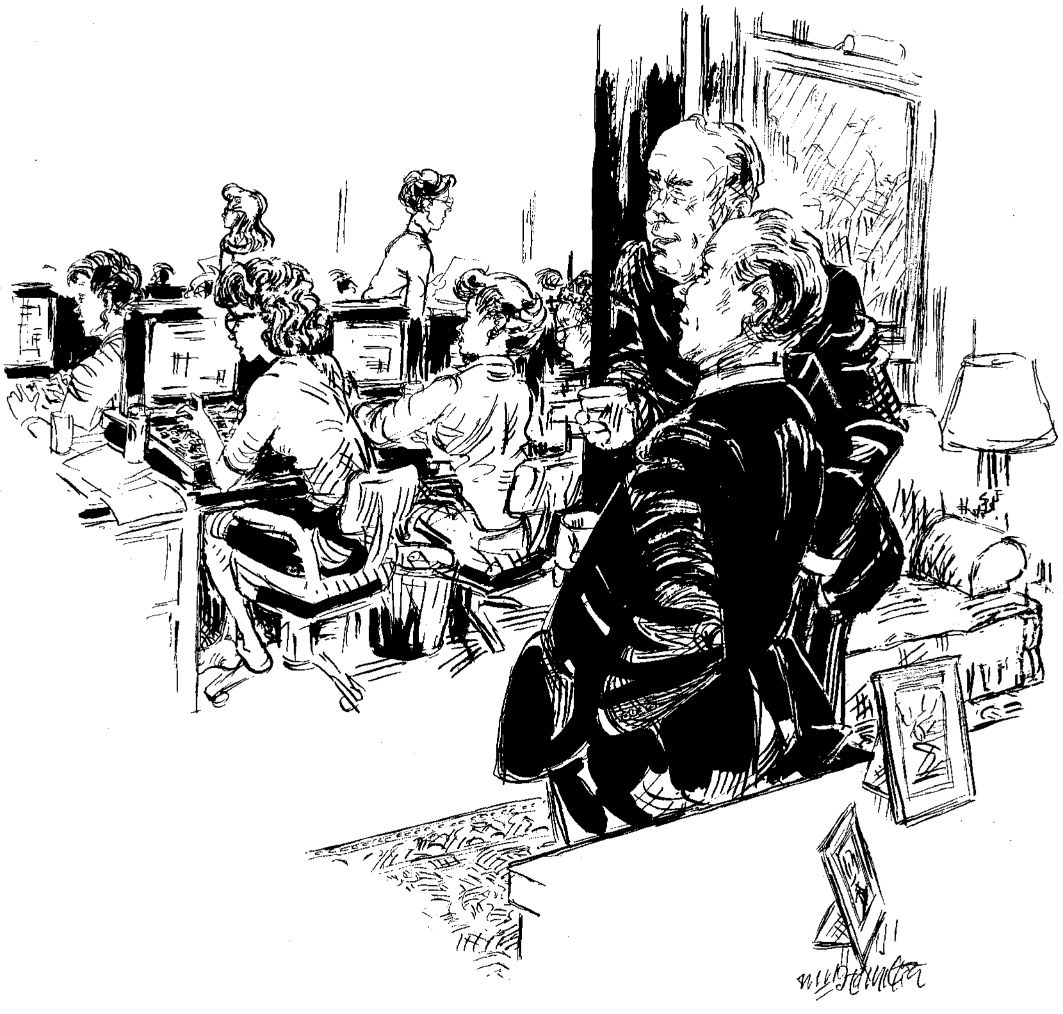
Schlafly, Pat Buchanan, Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed, Alan Keyes, Gary Bauer, Beverly LaHaye. These are the people responsible for what they like to call the most conservative Republican platform since 1964. They are a great force in the Party: not yet dominant but vying for dominance, organized, determined, and numerous. They represent more than a quarter of the delegates to the Convention. None of them will be allowed to speak from the podium in the Convention Hall, but today they are revelling anyway, celebrating their platform victory. The Reverend Jerry Falwell, mobbed by autograph seekers, sits large and red at a center table. "I'm happy," he says. "I can't think of a single thing I felt we needed that I didn't get. I'm happy with the platform and I'm happy with the candidates. 'Course, I wouldn't vote for my mother if she was pro-choice, but I understand what Haley Barbour is doing here, and I think everybody does."

Bob Dornan, the California congressman who constitutes a minority of one (he is the only actual berserker in either House), enters the tent to cheers as the band plays "The Ballad of Davy Crockett." He bounces from table to table like a pinball, bright and shining and clanging, yelling his "Hello!"s and "How are you!"s and hugging and kissing any woman or child who gets within arm's length. His face is pink and his eyes are blue and his chin is stuck up in the air, and he looks so happy he could bite somebody. He stops by the pastry table and grabs up a cream puff and gets half of it down in a gulp while answering a fan's question about whether he will run again in 2000. "Oh, I may, I may! Indeed, I may!" he bellows, his forefinger jabbing some imaginary chest. "But I need a new base, a totally different platform. I realize that now. The voters are funny! They will listen to a millionaire or a billionaire who buys his way in, but if you're not a rich man they want you to be a senator or a governor! They don't take the House seriously! Amazing but true! The people's House, but they don't take it seriously!"

Pat Robertson takes the stage waving his arms in a Richard Nixon V-for-victory pose. Gary Bauer brings the audience to its feet with a pledge: "We will have this party again, on the floor of the Republican Convention in the year 2000."

CHICAGO: The Arie Crown Theatre, on McCormick Place, is packed for *The Nation's* "Return to Chicago 1968-1996" celebration—"an afternoon of music & politics," featuring Crosby, Stills & Nash, Bonnie Raitt, Public Enemy's Chuck D., Jesse Jackson, Tom Hayden, Bella Abzug, Norman Mailer, Bobby Seale, and Senator Paul Simon, among others. In the lobby, where the press is, Andrew Hoffman, son of the late Abbie, is busy granting interviews to those who ask politely, or to those who merely ask, or, for that matter, to those who don't ask at all. He is in his thirties and is the very image of his father, with the same sleepy-lidded eyes and the same sly smile, and even a facsimile of the same clothes—scruffy bluejeans and a shirt he has marked up to resemble an American flag. He calls to mind an advertisement that runs in the back pages of young women's magazines, "Be a Model or Just Look Like One"—"Be a Yippie or Just Look Like One." He is spouting the sloganeering of yesteryear: "The military is passé. We should get rid of most of it if not all of it. . . . The youth of this world will find a new way to rise up and take over this planet. . . . We must grow up and start to understand why we have to take care of this little garden we call Mother Earth." He says he intends to vote for Clinton.

Nearby stands a fat man wearing a Ben & Jerry's T-shirt. His name is Aron Kay, and in the seventies he was, in a very minor way, famous. "I was the Pieman," he announces. "They called me the Pieman because I threw pies at people." He is more or less retired now. "The last pie I threw was four years ago, at Randall Terry"—the founder of Operation Rescue. Other relics of the drear dead past wander about, seeking the cameras and the notepads. Stew Albert, who in 1968 was the advance man for the Yippie candidate for President, a pig named Pigasus, is talking to a TV crew. "Where's the pig



"I love this hour at dusk when our internes start that low, sweet crooning."

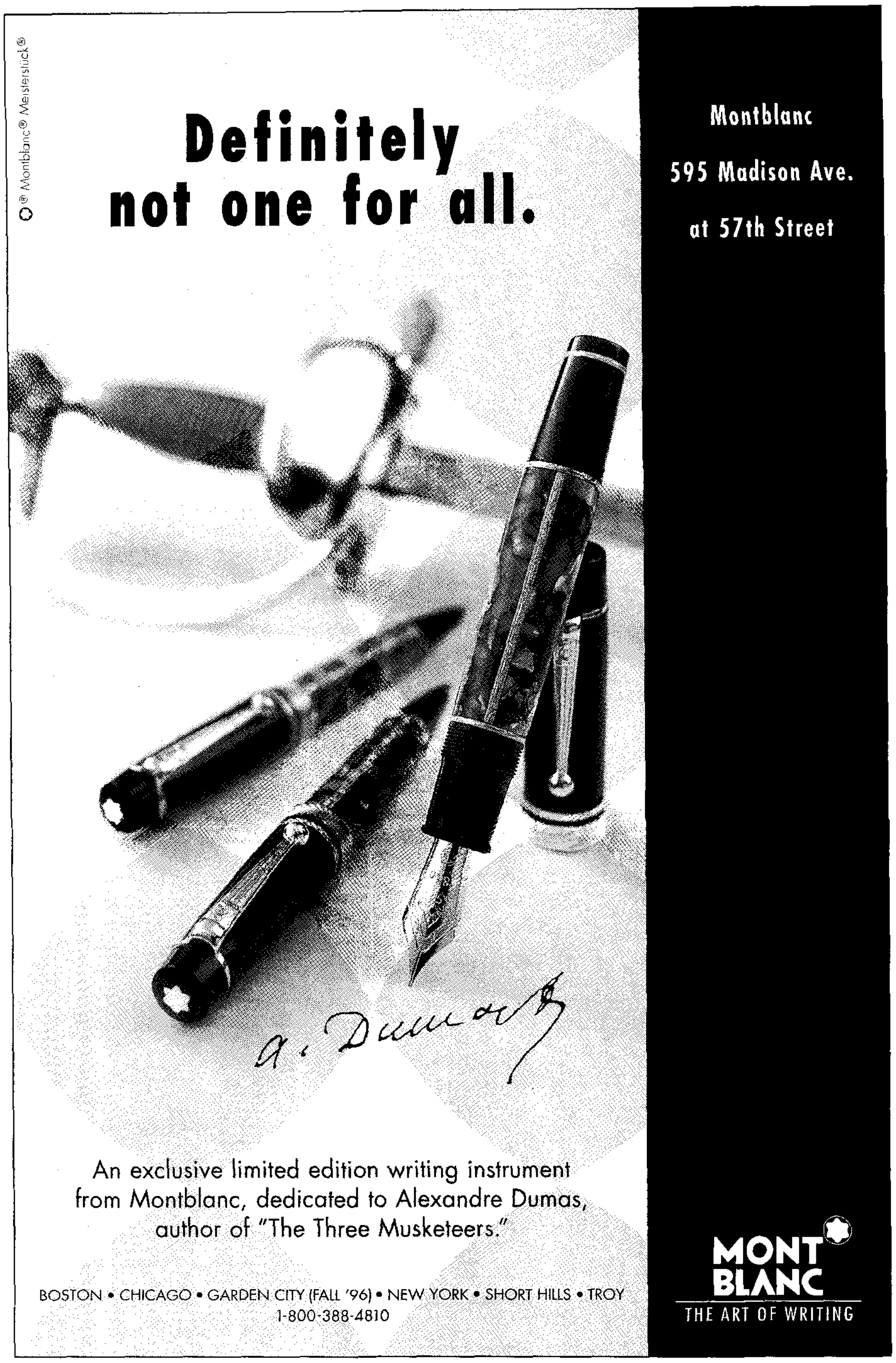
now? I don't know," he muses. "Probably in some policeman's genetic code."

Inside the theatre, Jesse Jackson gives a speech. "Let's hear it for Tom Hayden, for Bobby Rush, for the freedom fighters," Jackson says. Then Bella Abzug: "Women have decided they will no longer play in the playpen under the rules of the patriarchy, any more than they will live under a Pentagon protectorate." Tom Hayden is the last speaker. He takes various shots at his old enemies—Nixon and John Mitchell and Judge Julius Hoffman and what they used to call the older generation. He recalls being teargassed in Chicago in 1968, and marvels, "And now, twenty-eight years later, I come here to Chicago as an elected Democratic delegate to stay in the Hilton."

As these scenes suggest, the unhappy fact for both parties is that each has at its core a group of activists who are more radical in their beliefs than most voters, and even than most members of their party. The activists make up large percentages of those who regularly attend the Conventions—the delegates, alternates, committee chairs, state leaders, and interest-group leaders. Democrats like to say that the Republican Convention didn't reflect America, and the statement is true, but the Democratic gathering didn't either. Surveys of delegates at both Conventions this year, conducted by the New York *Times*/CBS News and by the Washington *Post*/ABC News, found that neither party's delegates were representative of the larger population, or, in some instances, even of their own rank and file, either in ideological or in demographic terms.

On the Republican side, for example, twenty-one per cent of the delegates surveyed identified themselves as members of the religious right, while only fifteen per cent of all voters nationwide see themselves in those terms. Seventy per cent of the delegates called themselves conservative, as against thirty-four per cent in the general voting population. As for the Democrats, the *Times* found that, while only sixteen per cent of voters in general, and only twenty-seven per cent even of Democratic voters, called themselves liberal, forty-three per cent of Democratic delegates said that they were liberal.

OF course, the party cores have always been home to the sort of cranks and ranters and single-interest obsessives that the more mild-minded members of the swing-voting popula-



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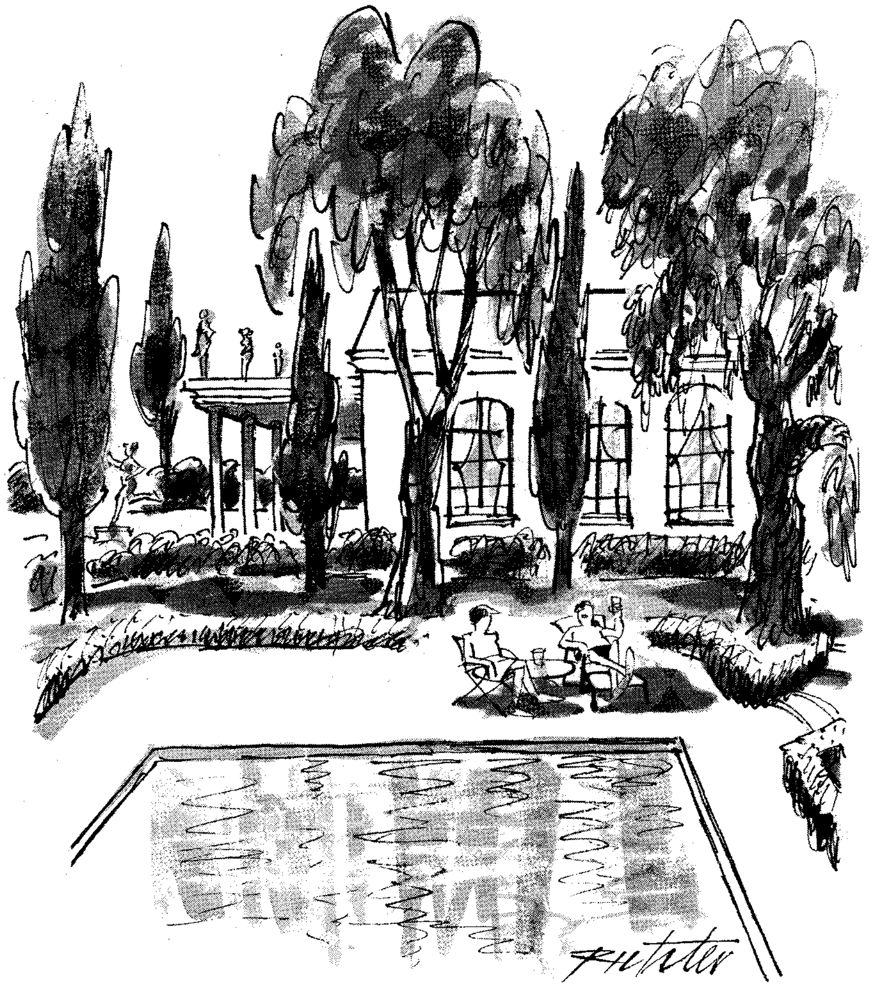
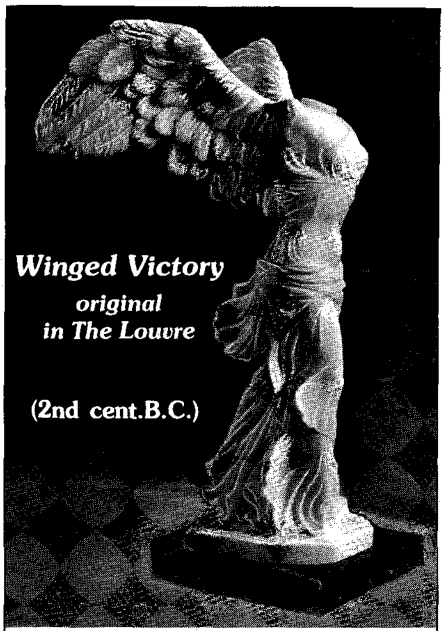


"If I won the lottery, I would go on living as I always did."

tion find off-putting. They used to be less ashamed of them, though, and more willing to allow them a public role. Television changed this, as it changed everything, from the time it started to broadcast national political Conventions, in the nineteen-fifties.

Democracy at work is an often harsh and nasty business, and the parties came to realize that a free-flowing, free-fighting Convention—the sort of Convention that the writing press enjoyed and celebrated to the parties' advantage—showed to disastrous effect when beamed live into American living rooms. Over the last two decades, television has been retreating from gavel-to-gavel coverage, which incurred losses in advertising revenue, eventually arriving at the general policy of one hour of prime-time coverage each Convention night, with two hours on the fourth and final night. In addition, television developed a role for itself not merely as the broadcaster of the Conventions but as a sort of ongoing judge, with the power to alter, through the omnipresent chatter of its commentators, the public's perception of what it was watching, even as it unfolded. And television commentary was endlessly fixated on two themes: conflict and error. As the Democrats found in the Dukakis vs. Jackson Convention of 1988, and the Republicans discovered in the Mean and Extreme Convention of 1992, television would always seize upon any scrap of a fight or tonal mistake, and chew it and chew it and chew it—until the conflict or the mistake defined the entire Convention. The only way to avoid this was to replace conflict and error with something else television valued: entertainment.

By 1995, when planning began in earnest for this summer's Conventions, the planners in both parties had come to accept as a given that their primary job was to make what happened in the hall conform to what television wanted. Bill Greener managed the Republican Convention this year. "Listen," Greener told



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me, "we don't make the rules to the game. We are dealing with the rules. And the rules are: You get an hour and don't forget in that hour we have got our commercials to air and our station breaks, and don't forget that we need time to showcase our talent, and don't forget that even before we think about going to the podium we have got to establish the presence of our anchor and our four floor correspondents, and don't forget that after that we are going to take a commercial break, and then we are going to go back to the anchor, and then we *might* take what you've got going at the podium. And that's just the way it is."

So, if you are trying to fit a Convention into one hour of prime-time television per night, and if you cannot afford to show the folks at home what the sideshow denizens of your big tent party look like up close, and if you must keep the attention of as many viewers as possible, what do you do?

The first step is market research, which both parties conducted and which, for both, turned up pretty much the same results: the female, married audience that they targeted did not want to see politicians or political conflict, but did want to see discussions of the issues with which the audience was concerned—issues relating to the family, such as crime, education, community, health, the environment. Gary Smith, a producer who specializes in large-scale television-entertainment shows, produced and directed the 1996 Democratic Convention, his third in a row. "The surveys showed that people didn't want to hear from politicians," Smith said. "The American people would much rather hear from other people than from political figures."

Red Cavaney is the president and C.E.O. of the American Plastics Council; he has worked at every Republican Convention since 1972 and was director of official proceedings for the 1992 and 1996 Convention programs. "Through polling and focus groups, we found that the people who watch these things are interested in issues, but could care less about the personages—Senator So-and-So, and all that," Cavaney said. "People generally find it much easier to relate to people with whom they could identify themselves—as opposed to a politician."

With these findings, both parties' planners decided to minimize the presence of politicians in prime time, and to use instead either "real people" or celebrities as speakers whenever possible. "That was a decision made at the earliest stages of planning," Smith recalled. "We decided to really bring more people in—Christopher Reeve, Sarah Brady, and so on—and if you watched many of our video segments you saw they also involved people."

The next step was to identify themes that played upon the issues and emotions that the research showed would reach the target audience—motifs and submotifs that would run through all four nights of programming, repeated over and over (because most people are watching in small chunks of time, and because repetition is the key to selling) and carried on several layers: through speeches, through videotaped segments, through music. Again, both parties hit upon similar themes, which they identified in broad, overarching terms, and then broke down into smaller, much more precisely targeted subthemes.

For the Democrats, the overarching theme was "opportunity, responsibility, community," which was further parsed and more concretely expressed in twenty-three or twenty-four subthemes, carried by nearly two hundred speakers. For the Republicans, the overarching theme was "restoring the American dream," which was subdivided into themes of taxes, crime, health care, welfare, government responsiveness, and community. These subthemes were further divided to, as Cavaney puts it, "narrowcast" the message to the different concerns that research had identified within the larger issue. "For instance, one of our findings was on crime, and there we found that crime actually has six or seven different subsets, and people who are involved in one subset don't really overlap with people in other subsets," he explained. "So, a person who is concerned about, say, drug use among adolescents might not consider himself in the same universe of people as a person who is concerned about rape, say, or spousal abuse."

The next step was to match speakers with each defined theme. At the Democratic Convention, for instance, Sarah and Jim Brady carried the message on gun control, a subtheme of both the "community" theme and the "responsibility" theme. For the Republicans, the Pennsylvania rape victim Jan Licence carried the message on rape victimization, a subtheme of the theme of "crime." In this regard, the Republican Convention was the

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more disciplined of the two. While some Democratic speakers were allowed some leeway in their speech topics, the G.O.P. Convention planners assigned a topic and a length to every single speaker except the nominees and Colin Powell and Elizabeth Dole. "We did not invite anybody to speak, whether a great politician or not, and give them permission just to say anything they wanted to," Cavaney told me. "Nobody was allowed to do that, nobody—not one individual." Speakers who refused to toe the line were simply not allowed to speak, as Massachusetts Governor William Weld and California Governor Pete Wilson discovered. The enforcement was brutal. I heard one G.O.P. Convention director handle a minor speaker threatening to run over his allotted time. "You tell him that I control that microphone," the Convention director told the man's press secretary. "You tell him that if he goes long or goes off-message, he is going to be speaking to dead air. I will yank that mike. You tell him that."

When all of this was put together, the result was something no one could have imagined twenty years ago: a Convention laid out on a timeline, with a shooting script and music cues and lighting cues and camera angles plotted in advance (and with the close coöperation of the networks whose commentators complained so of the packaging). A late draft version of the G.O.P.'s timeline for its four-day Convention ran to twenty-five pages, covering one thousand two hundred and eighty minutes of programming, timed down to increments of a minute. For one unimportant block of programming—twenty-four minutes of opening ceremonies for the second-day session—the timeline planned for a Call to Order (Event PL-980) from 05:00 to 05:01, followed by the Introduction of Colors (Event OT-990) at 05:01 to 05:02, followed by the Presentation of Colors by San Diego Joint Scouting Color Guard from 05:02 to 05:04, and so on, through Event OT-1080, Ending Applause and Video Introduction of R.N.C. Co-Chair Evelyn McPhail from 05:21 to 05:24. The sequence involved thirteen separate acts, one videotaped presentation, one small military unit, at least fourteen actors, and the use of two "video walls." Its highlight was Event OT-4600, running from 05:16 to 05:18 and described as Ending Applause and Spotlight Sequentially on Each of Six American Dream Murals with Main Street Americans Moving to Positions Behind Podium.

It is difficult to point to the precise moment when it all began to seem unhinged from what was true and real, when the cognitive dissonance between the spectacle of the family-hour Conventions and the business of politics became deafening. For some, it may have been when Jack Kemp issued his ringing call for a nation where "every single child is able to grow up to reach for his or her God-given potential—including those who come to America, including those who are willing to risk everything to come to this nation"—as he addressed a party that had just approved a platform advocating for the first time in American history the denial of automatic citizenship to the children of illegal immigrants. For others, it may have been listening to Democratic Convention speakers reiterating President Clinton's promise that "the era of big government is over" while the President himself, en route to Chicago, was throwing from his train a new big-government proposal every hundred and fifty miles or so: a two-and-a-half-billion-dollar program to insure that "all America's children should be able to read on their own by the third grade"; a bill to make it illegal for people convicted of domestic abuse to buy guns; and a plan to clean up toxic-waste sites.

For me, it was, oddly enough, an actual, untelevised moment—at the People for the American Way party on the night before the Democratic Convention opened—when Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, explained to me why the Democratic Convention delegates who overwhelmingly disapproved of the recent welfare-reform bill didn't have a problem with a Democratic President who had signed the bill into law. "There is no difference among Democrats on this," she said. "The Administration and the delegates have no disagreement on this. The delegates are unhappy with the President's decision to sign the bill, and the President is unhappy with the bill, too. There is no substantive disagreement. Everyone agrees that he signed it, and he has to fix it, and to fix it we need to elect a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress in 1996, so we can repeal the parts of the bill we hate, and get better welfare reform." (The cognitive-dissonance bumper sticker: "Vote for Clinton—Only He Can Undo What He Has Done.")

But the disjunction between what is real and what is intended to become Memorex has been the underlying dynamic of media politics for a long time, and it doesn't appear to bother people as much as it used to; they may notice it, but they don't object if it is not too blatant. So, while journalists groused and some viewers switched off their sets during the shows from San Diego and Chicago (and it is likely that many of those viewers objected mostly to the tedious blather—the journalistic grousing—that the networks laid on top of what was already pretty dull stuff), the approach was still holding together . . . until Dick Morris made the front page.

The problem with the elaborate edifices that the parties have built to package politics for television is not simply that they are vulnerable to the slightest push—mere stage sets, lovely in their freshly painted way, but of purposely ephemeral construction, built to be knocked down. The problem is that these are stage sets on top of which, astonishingly enough, things of great weight and value have been placed. It is not simply that the structures are vulnerable in themselves; it is that they also render vulnerable everything that rests upon them: when nothing is real, everything is metaphor.

The press and the public have learned to take at face value nothing in politics that happens on purpose and to look for larger meanings in everything that happens by accident. This is the inevitable consequence of the artificers' design: by reducing politics to family, they have taught the audience they are wooing that private lives are public metaphor. Al Gore's sister stands for the case against tobacco, and Bob Dole's wounds stand for the case for conservatism, and Hillary Clinton's mother stands for the case for Bill Clinton's character as a leader. So, the story of Dick Morris and the call girl must stand for something, too. So, the downfall of a political hack at the hands of a hooker and a scandal sheet may be a metaphor for Clinton's history of artifice in his own tabloid scandals, and for the round-heeled relationship between a President and his party (consensual sex, with a payoff in the end), and for whatever else anybody can make it. ♦

ANNALS OF SCIENCE

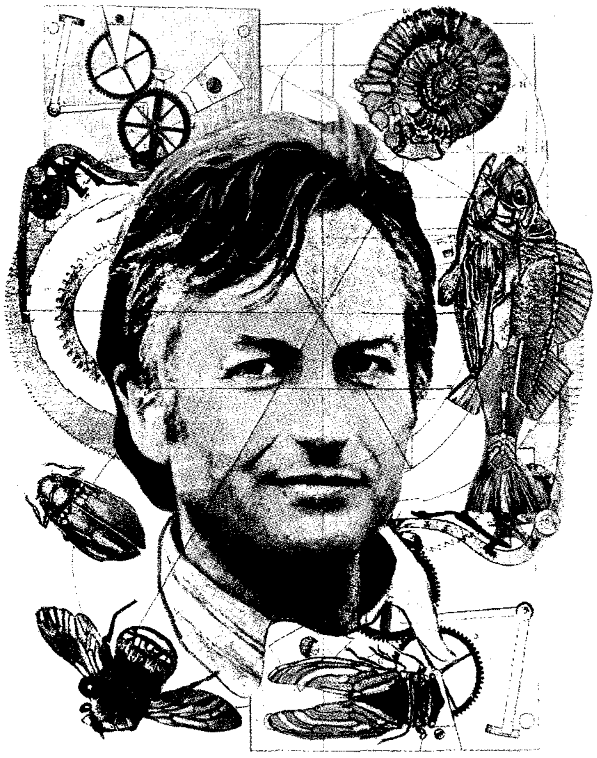
RICHARD DAWKINS'S EVOLUTION

An irascible don becomes a surprising celebrity.

BY IAN PARKER

RICHARD DAWKINS, arch-Darwinist, author of "The Selfish Gene," and Britain's village atheist, has a reputation for intellectual austerity and single-mindedness: he is a professor who will not stop professing. Because he knows the meaning of life (which is evolution by natural selection), and because others do not know it, or only half know it, or try willfully to mess with its simple, delicious truth, he promotes his subject in a way that—if you wanted to drive him crazy—you could call evangelical. Besides writing his beautifully pellucid and best-selling books on Darwinian themes, Dawkins, who is a zoologist by training, is forever finding other opportunities to speak on behalf of evolution and on behalf of science. Now in his mid-fifties, he has become a familiar floppy-haired figure on television and in the newspapers, where he energetically scraps with bishops and charlatans. He recently argued, for example, that astrologers should be jailed, and he has complained warmly about what he alleges are one novelist's slurs on his profession. ("Sir," he wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*, "Fay Weldon's incoherent, petulant and nihilistic rant is the sort of thing I remember scribbling as a disgruntled teenager.") Dawkins regards it as his duty not to let things pass, or rest, and as he makes his slightly awkward—but still dashing—progress through the British media he occasionally encounters charges of arrogance and aggressiveness. It is not universally agreed that he is science's ideal public-relations director.

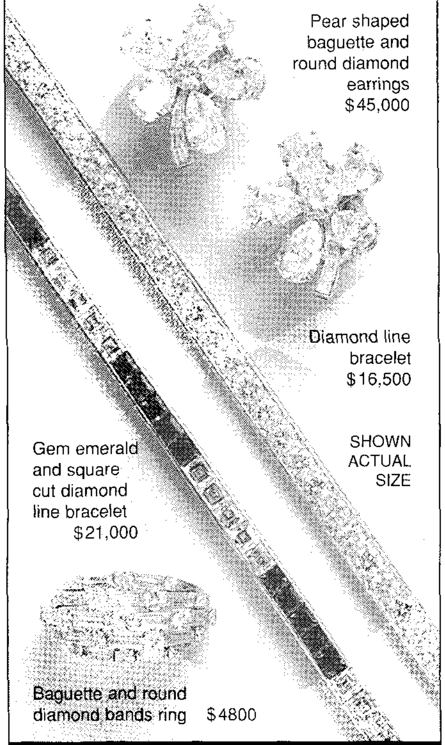
This, though, is now his job. Dawkins has been appointed the first Charles Simonyi Professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University—Simonyi, the sponsor, being a soft-spoken Hungarian-born American made rich by long employment at Microsoft. Dawkins will now be expected to do more of what he has been doing: to write books, appear on television, and help counter what he calls "the stereotype of scientists' being scruffy nerds with rows of pens in their top pocket"—an image that he regards, with a typical level of moderation, as "just about as wicked as racist stereotypes." Richard Dawkins has been made the new Oxford Professor of Being Richard Dawkins.



Dawkins: A Darwinist with a CD-ROM.

DIANA CRAFT

Because of all his media activity—those bright, staring eyes on television—it has sometimes been possible to forget that Dawkins's reputation is founded



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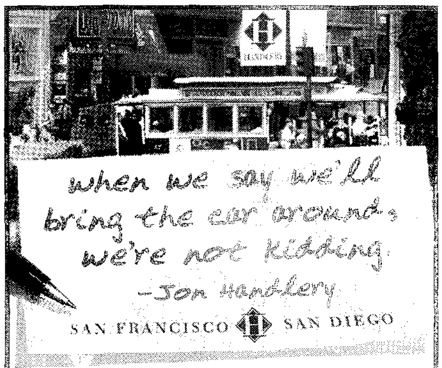

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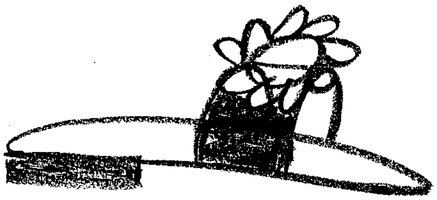
on a remarkable writing achievement. Twenty years ago, with "The Selfish Gene" (1976), Dawkins managed to secure a wildly enthusiastic general readership for writing that was also of interest to his professional colleagues: he seduced two audiences at once. Biologists found themselves learning about their subject not from a paper in a learned journal but—as in an earlier tradition of scientific disclosure, one that includes Darwin's own work—from a book reviewed in the Sunday press. His later books, "The Blind Watchmaker" (1986) and "River Out of Eden" (1995), had a similar effect.

Like so much of Dawkins's enterprise, the inspiration for "The Selfish Gene" was rebuttal: the book was designed to banish an infuriatingly widespread popular misconception about evolution. The misconception was that Darwinian selection worked at the level of the group or the species, that it had something to do with the balance of nature. How else could one understand, for example, the evolution of apparent "altruism" in animal behavior? How could self-sacrifice, or niceness, ever have been favored by natural selection? There were answers to these questions, and they had been recently developed, in particular, by the evolutionary biologists W. D. Hamilton, now at Oxford, and George Williams, of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. But their answers were muted. Dawkins has written, "For me, their insight had a visionary quality. But I found their expressions of it too laconic, not full-throated enough. I was convinced that an amplified and developed version could make everything about life fall into place, in the heart as well as in the brain."

Essentially, their insight was that altruism in nature was a trick of the light. Once one understands that evolution works at the level of the gene—a process of gene survival, taking place (as Dawkins developed it) in bodies that the gene occupies and then discards—the problem of altruism begins to disappear. Evolution favors strategies that cause as many of an animal's genes as possible to survive—strategies that may not immediately appear to be evolutionarily sound. In the idea's simplest form, if an animal puts its life at risk for its offspring, it is preserving a creature—a gene "vehicle," in Dawkins's language—half of whose genes are its own. This is a sensible, selfish strategy, despite the possible inconvenience of death. No one is being nice.

Starting from this point, "The Selfish Gene" took its reader into more complex areas of animal behavior, where more persuasion was needed—more mathematics, sometimes, and more daring logical journeys. Dawkins assumed no prior knowledge of the subject in his reader, yet was true to his science. He made occasional ventures into ambitious prose (genes "swarm in huge colonies, safe inside gigantic lumbering robots"), but mostly relied on sustained clarity, the taming of large numbers, and the judicious use of metaphor. The result was exhilarating. Upon the book's publication, the *Times* called it "the sort of popular science writing that makes the reader feel like a genius." Douglas Adams, a friend of Dawkins's and the author of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," found the experience of reading it "one of those absolutely shocking moments of revelation when you understand that the world is fundamentally different from what you thought it was." He adds, "I'm hesitating to use the word, but it's almost like a religious experience."

TWENTY years later, Richard Dawkins finds himself something of a curiosity—a scientist with an honorary doctorate of letters, a philosopher with a CD-ROM deal, an ambassador who acknowledges that he is "not a diplomat," and a rather reticent man who in print is by turns flamboyantly scornful and boundlessly enthusiastic. I had been told that he "thinks scientifically and only scientifically," so when I recently visited him at his apartment in central Oxford—he has since moved house—I was surprised to find a great many wooden carrousel animals there, and a lot of cushions, which made a kind of sitcom chute from chair to floor. It was interesting, too, to note the cupboard by the living-room door, which had been lovingly hand-painted to represent the details of the life of Richard Dawkins: a childhood in Africa, a college room, a computer, a head of Charles Darwin, a young daughter "building castles in the air," and a panel suggesting an international reputation. The cupboard, I learned, was painted by Dawkins's mother, and was a gift to her son on his fiftieth birthday. (He is now fifty-five.) The horses and other large wooden animals were brought into the apartment by Lalla Ward, Dawkins's wife (his third), who inherited the collection. She used to be an actress, and it has caused some joy in the British press that Professor Dawkins is now married to a woman who played the part of an assistant to the television science-fiction character Doctor Who. (It's as if Stephen Jay Gould had married Lieutenant Uhura.)



Having finished with some students, Dawkins now appeared in the living room. A handsome matinée version of an Oxford don, he was wearing leather slippers and blue corduroy trousers. His manner managed to suggest both caution and assurance—he has something of the air of a bullied schoolboy suddenly made prefect.

We talked about God, and other obstructions to an understanding of science. Dawkins complained of a "fairly common pattern in television news: right at the end a smile comes onto the face of the newsreader and this is the scientific joke—some scientist has proved that such and such is the case." He went on, "And it's clearly the bit of fun at the end, it's not serious at all. I want science to be taken seriously, because, after all, it's less ephemeral—it has a more eternal aspect than whatever the politics of the day might be, which, of course, gets the lead in the news."

Much of what is important to others is ephemeral to Dawkins. He shares his life with Darwin's idea—one that the philosopher Daniel Dennett, of Tufts, has called "the single best idea anyone has ever had." Dawkins does have tastes in art and in politics. He does have friends, and he has become more sociable in recent years. But his non-scientific tastes seem to shrink at the touch of science. He admires Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," but told me, "I really do feel what Bach might have done with some really decent inspiration, considering what he achieved with what he had." He was imagining "Evolution," the oratorio.

While we were talking at his apartment, the telephone rang often. Inevitably, Dawkins was one of the first to be featured in a jokey column in the *Guardian* called "Celebrity Scholars: A Cut-Out-and-Keep Guide to the Academics Whose Phones Are Always Ringing." He is not a geneticist, but because he once wrote a book that had the word "gene" in the title he is frequently asked to comment on contemporary genetic issues—the discovery of genes "for" this or that, say, or the ethics of genetic engineering—and he ordinarily refers journalists to colleagues with the relevant expertise.

Dawkins is still most comfortable dealing with the pure, incontestable logic of Darwinian evolution. His fifth book, "Climbing Mount Improbable," will be published this month in the United States. With a fresh, unifying metaphor, Dawkins here continues his long-term project to make natural selection as persuasive and comprehensible to others as it is to him. On the peaks of Mount Improbable, he explains, are to be found, say, a spiderweb and the camouflage of a stick insect. It would seem that one has to scale sheer cliffs of improbability to reach such complexity by natural selection. For one thing, natural selection does not provide for developments that will turn out to be advantageous only after a million years of evolution. What use is a wing stub? What good is a half-evolved eye? But Dawkins points out the long, winding paths that lead to the summit of Mount Improbable—paths that have the gentlest of slopes and require no freakish upward leaps. He takes his reader up the slope from no eye to eye: a single (not entirely useless) photosensitive cell caused by genetic mutation, a group of such cells, a group arranged on a curve, and so forth. Dawkins knows that the length of this path will always daunt some readers. "Human brains," he writes, "though they sit atop one of its grandest peaks, were never designed to imagine anything as slow as the long march up Mount Improbable."

DAWKINS took me to lunch in New College, where he has been a fellow for twenty-six years—"a bread-and-butter worker," he says. He and Lalla Ward and I sat at a long wooden table in a high-ceilinged room and ate soup with huge silver spoons, and between courses Lalla Ward set herself the task of making a rather introspective-looking college employee return her smile.

As a writer and broadcaster and propagandist, Dawkins has now left the laboratory far behind him. Wondering if this was a source of regret, I asked him if he would exchange what he had achieved for a more traditional scientific discovery. "I'd rather go to my grave having been Watson or Crick than having discovered a wonderful way of explaining things to people," he says. "But if the discovery you're talking about is an ordinary, run-of-the-mill discovery of the sort being made in laboratories around the world every day, you feel: Well, if I hadn't done this, somebody else would have, pretty soon. So if you have a gift for reaching hundreds of thousands—millions—of people and enlightening them, I think doing that runs a close second to making a really great discovery like Watson and Crick."

After lunch, we walked back to the apartment, a hundred yards away, passing through a Chinese-style flock of student cyclists. In his cluttered living room, Dawkins talked about his past. His father, he said, worked in the British colonial service in Nyasaland, now Malawi, but with the outbreak of the Second World War he moved to Kenya to join the Allied forces. Richard was born in Nairobi, in 1941. In 1946, his father unexpectedly inherited a cousin's farm near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire, and in 1949 the family returned to England. Dawkins drifted into zoology at Oxford, but he became fully engaged in it only when, some time after his arrival, the speculative nature of the subject revealed itself to him. "I think students of biochemistry, for example, before they can even start, probably have to get a lot of textbook knowledge under their belt," he says. "In animal behavior, you can jump straight into controversy and argument."

While still an undergraduate, Dawkins was taught by Niko Tinbergen, the Dutch-born animal behaviorist (and, later, Nobel Prize winner), who had him read doctoral theses in place of the standard texts. Dawkins remembers reading one thesis about two species of grasshopper, *Chorthippus brunneus* and *Chorthippus biguttulus*, that coexist on the European continent and look the same. "The only known difference between them is that they sing differently," he says. "They don't reproduce with each other, *because* they sing differently. As a

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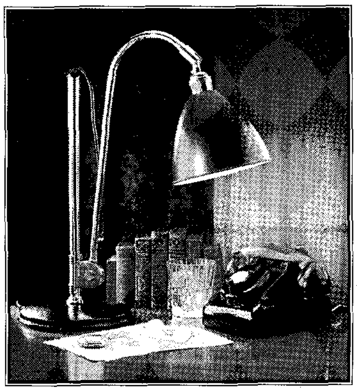

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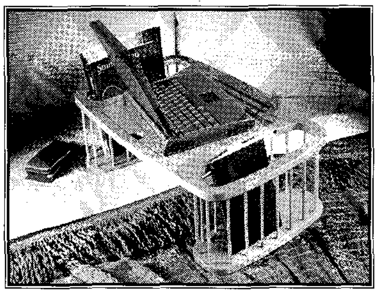

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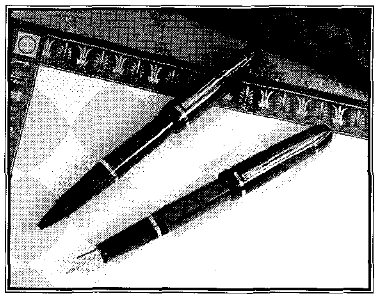

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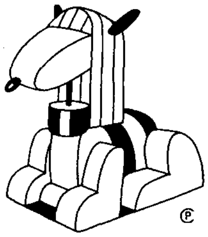
consequence of their not reproducing together, they're called two separate species—and they are." It's not that they cannot breed but that they do not. Dawkins continues, "In the thesis that I read, the author found it was easy enough to fool them to mate with each other by playing them the song of their own species. And I got a feeling for how you design experiments when you're faced with a problem like this—and the intellectual importance of this first process in evolution. It happened to be grasshoppers, but it's the same process for all species on earth. They've all diverged from an ancestral species, and that process of divergence is the origin of species—it's the fundamental process that has given rise to all diversity on earth."

Dawkins graduated in 1962, and started immediately on his doctorate, for which he developed a mathematical model of decision-making in animals. In 1967, he married for the first time, and took up a post as an assistant professor of zoology at Berkeley. He became "a bit involved" in the dramas of the period, he told me. He and his wife marched a little, and worked on Eugene McCarthy's Presidential campaign. (Although colleagues today see Dawkins as apolitical, and enemies have sought to project a right-wing agenda onto his science, he has always voted on the left.) He returned to Oxford after two years and continued research into the mathematics of animal behavior, making much use of computers. In the winter of 1973-74, a coal miners' strike caused power cuts in Britain, preventing Dawkins from properly continuing his computer-driven research. He decided to write a book, which he finished a year later with "a tremendous momentum." The book was "The Selfish Gene," and its preface starts, "This book should be read almost as though it were science fiction. It is designed to appeal to the imagination. But it is not science fiction: it is science."



When "The Selfish Gene" was published, in 1976, readers began writing to Dawkins that their lives had been changed; and most were pleased with the change. (Dawkins's peripheral theory of the self-replicating "meme," as a way of understanding the transmission of human culture and ideas—a meme for religion, or for baseball hats worn backward—began its impressive self-replicating career.) But Dawkins also caught the attention of his peers. Helena Cronin, a British philosopher of science, explains the response this way: "Very often in science one finds that there are ideas in the air, and lots of people hold them, but they don't even realize they hold them. The person who can crystallize them, and lay out not only the central idea but its implications for future scientific research can often make a tremendous contribution. And I think that's what 'The Selfish Gene' did. Lots of scientists, they'd been Darwinians all their lives, but they'd been inarticulate Darwinians. And now they really understood what was foundational to Darwinism and what was peripheral. And once you understand what is foundational, then you begin to deduce conclusions." In a variety of fields, Dawkins proved to be a catalyst.

In the twenty years following the publication of "The Selfish Gene"—years of teaching, fatherhood, wealth, and encroaching responsibilities as the British media's favorite scientist—Dawkins has published any number of papers and articles, and four more books, including "The Blind Watchmaker," a best-selling study of Darwinian design, written with the reach and elegance of "The Selfish Gene." On a roiling mass of ants in Panama, for instance:

> I never did see the queen, but somewhere inside that boiling ball she was the central data bank, the repository of the master DNA of the whole colony. Those gasping soldiers were prepared to die for the queen, not because they loved their mother, not because they had been drilled in the ideals of patriotism, but simply because their brains and their jaws were built by genes stamped from the master die carried in the queen herself. They behaved like brave soldiers because they had inherited the genes of a long line of ancestral queens whose lives, and whose genes, had been saved by soldiers as brave as themselves. My soldiers had inherited the same genes from the present queen as those old soldiers had inherited from the ancestral queens. My soldiers were guarding the master copies of the very instructions that made them do the guarding. They were guarding the wisdom of their ancestors.

These have been twenty years of rising confidence and influence. "The world must be full of people who are biologists today rather than physicists because of Dawkins," John Maynard Smith, the senior British biologist, says. Outside the universities, in a climate newly friendly to accessible science books, Dawkins has become a literary fixture. Ravi Mirchandani, who published Dawkins at Viking, says, "If you're an intelligent reader, and you read certain literary novels that everybody has to read, along with seeing Tarantino movies, then reading Richard Dawkins has become part of your cultural baggage."

Dawkins's version of evolution also attracts critics, for it is dazzlingly digital. It features "robots" and "vehicles" and DNA, not flesh and fur; some evolutionary biologists regard him as a kind of reductionist fanatic—an "ultra-Darwinist" who overplays the smooth mathematical progress of natural selection and its relevance to an animal's every characteristic, every nook and cranny. A biting review of "The Selfish Gene" by Richard Lewontin, of Harvard, published in *Nature*, talked of "Dawkins's discovery of vulgar Darwinism." It was an error of "new Panglossians," Lewontin wrote, to think that "all describable behaviour must be the direct product of natural selection." (This is the sin of excessive "adaptationism.") In the continuing debate, Maynard Smith, George Williams, and W. D. Hamilton are in one camp; in the other are Steven Rose, Lewontin, Leon Kamin (these three collaborated on a book called "Not in Our Genes"), and Stephen Jay Gould, the man who is in many ways Dawkins's American counterpart. Dawkins and Gould have undertaken the same project—eliminating the barrier between the practice of science and its communication to a wider audience. And they stand shoulder to shoulder against the creationists. But they would not want to be stuck in the same elevator.

In 1979, Gould and Lewontin wrote a famous paper called "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme," which argued that natural selection can be limited by or can be a by-product of an animal's architecture—in the way that the spandrels of St. Mark's in Venice (described by the authors as "the tapering triangular spaces formed by the intersection of two rounded arches at right angles") are "necessary architectural by-products of mounting a dome on rounded arches," and were not designed to be painted upon, although that might be how it looks. Gould also con-tests the evolutionary "gradualism" of the Dawkins camp, and promotes "punctuated equilibrium"—the theory that evolution goes by fits and starts. Gould's opponents suspect him of exaggerating his differences with contemporary Darwinism: they want him to know that one can make a stir in science without making a revolution. Dawkins said, "I really want to say that there are no major disagreements." But he added, "I think the tendency of American intellectuals to learn their evolution from him is unfortunate, and that's putting it mildly."

"Someday, son, all this will be mine."

• •

EARLIER this year, Richard Dawkins took part in a public debate in a hall on the edge of Regent's Park, in central London. The debate, which was organized by the Oxford-based Jewish society L'Chaim, set Dawkins against the very distinguished Jewish scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. The question to be debated was "Does God exist?" In the lobby, tempers were fraying as it became clear that the event had been greatly oversubscribed. Three hundred people were sent away, and one could hear cries of "I've got a ticket! I'm not moving!" and so on.

The two speakers took their places on the wooden stage of the main hall, and were introduced with some old Woody Allen jokes. Dawkins then spoke of design, and of the miserable logic of trying to use a God—who must be complex—as an explanation of the existence of complex things. By contrast, he said, "Darwinian evolution explains complicated things in terms of simple things." In reply, Rabbi Steinsaltz made an occasionally witty but rather digressive speech, in which he always seemed to lose interest in a point just before he made it. He talked of giraffes, though it was not entirely clear what we were to think of them. ("You know these animals. Beautiful eyes.") Dawkins found himself arguing with a theist of his imagination rather than with the man to his right, who was frustratingly unresponsive to his favorite evolutionary sound bites. ("Not a single one of your ancestors died young. They all copulated at least once.") One member of the society told me that Dawkins was significantly gentler than he used to be at these meetings: he used to go into "a frenzy of savage attack, saying all religious people are delusional, weak-minded." That night, he seemed to win the debate, speaking in his curious shy, confident way.

This is the kind of event that presents the new Professor of Public Understanding with a problem: he has become wary of the atheist's reputation suffocating the evolutionist's. And yet he cares deeply about religion; he is sure that it matters. "It's important to recognize that religion isn't something sealed off in a watertight compartment," he says. "Religions do make claims about the universe—the same kinds of claims that scientists make, except they're usually false." Richard Dawkins is not a great one for cultural relativism. He says, "The proof of the pudding is: When you actually fly to your international conference of cultural anthropologists, do you go on a magic carpet or do you go on a Boeing 747?"

In Dawkins's kitchen in Oxford, a headline had been torn out of a newspaper and stuck on the wall, in an office-humor sort of way. It read "THE PROBLEMS OF DAWKINISM." The main problem, which is experienced particularly by those who have not read his books, remains one of tone. Douglas Adams says, laughing, "Richard once made a rather wonderful remark to me. He said something like 'I really don't think I'm arrogant, but I do get impatient with people who don't share with me the same humility in front of the facts.' " The glory of Darwinism fills Dawkins's brain, but it drops out of the brains of others, or is nudged out by God or Freud or football or Uranus moving into Aquarius, and Dawkins finds this maddening. "It is almost as if the human brain were specifically designed to misunderstand Darwinism, and to find it hard to believe," he has written. Dawkins does not seem to have developed this point, and he sometimes allows disdain or mockery to take the place of a clearer understanding of it—the evolution of resistance to evolution. Even the admiring Charles Simonyi, who funds the job for which Richard Dawkins is so precisely suited, and so precisely unsuited, says he has urged Dawkins to "tame his militancy."

"I'm a friendly enough sort of chap," Dawkins told me. "I'm not a hostile person to meet. But I think it's important to realize that when two opposite points of view are expressed with equal intensity, the truth does not necessarily lie exactly halfway between them. It is possible for one side to be simply wrong." ♦

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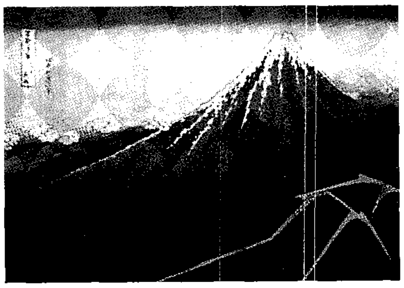

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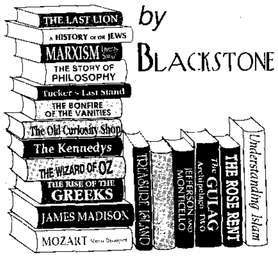
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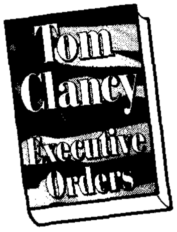

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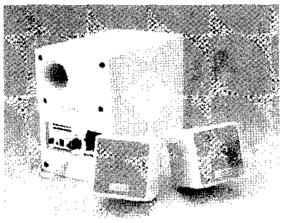

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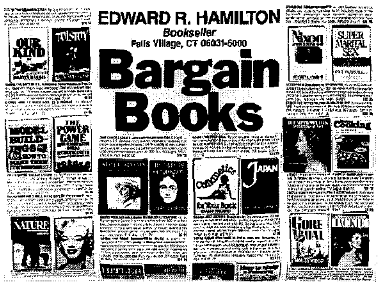

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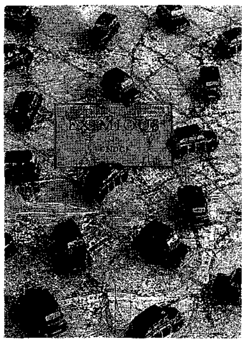

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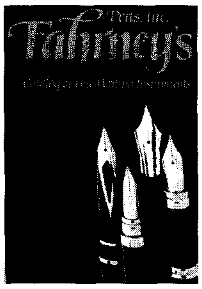

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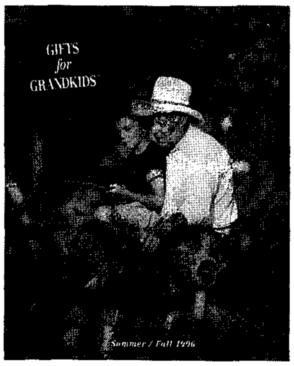

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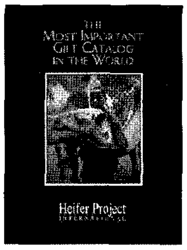

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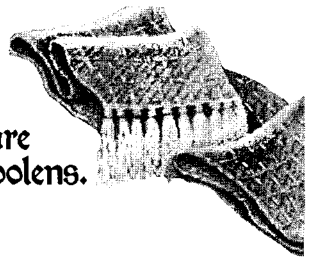

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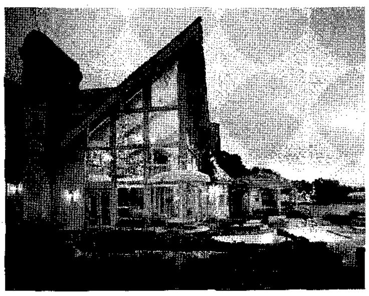

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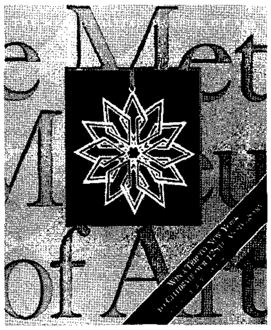

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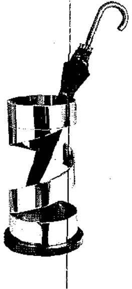

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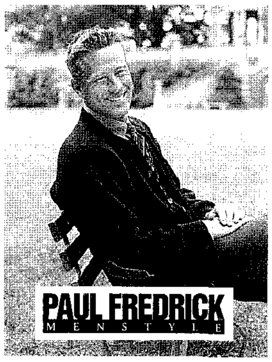

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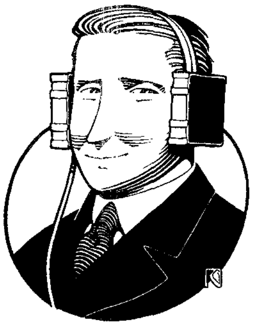

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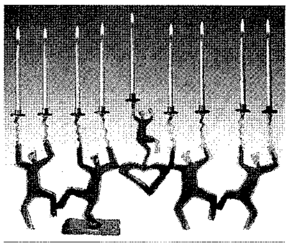

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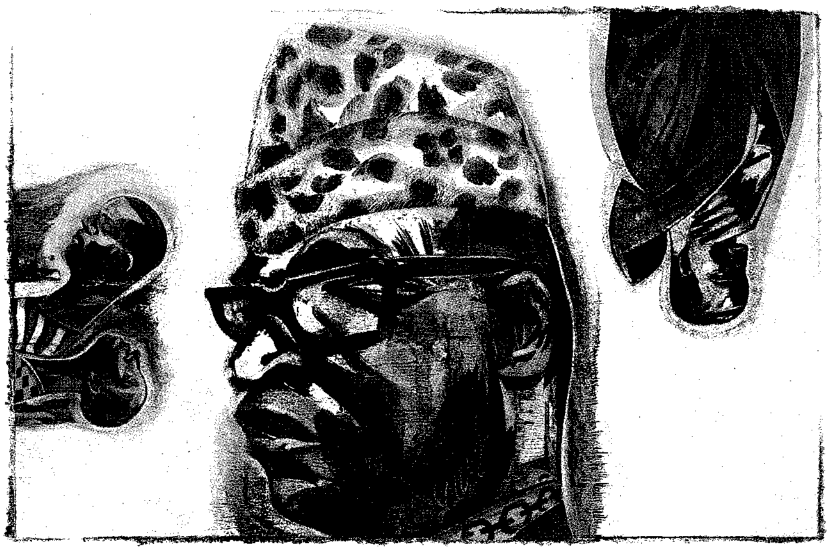
LETTER FROM ZAIRE

NEIGHBORHOOD BULLY

How genocide revived President Mobutu.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH



Mobutu Sese Seko: Western powers are courting the despot once again.

JOE MORSE

IN the foothills of the Virunga volcanoes, in eastern Zaire, on a rise overlooking the lakeside peasant village of Mokoto, stands the ruin of a monastery which might be taken for a relic of medieval Europe. But this ruin is new. Until a few months ago, Mokoto operated very much like an ancient cathedral town. While the villagers lived below, in huts made mostly of mud brick and thatch, the Trappist monks on the hill lived in an imposing compound of masonry and fine woodwork, with a large church, a library, a hostel for visitors, a dairy with nearly a thousand cows, a motor-vehicle repair shop, and an electrical plant powered by a water wheel. The monastery was the chief provider of social services to Mokoto and neighboring villages; the monks ran six schools and a dispensary, and they had designed a water system for locals, who had previously spent much of their time carrying buckets. In January and February of this year, when hundreds of people began showing up at the monastery, seeking sanctuary from bands of attackers who had chased them from their homes, Father Dhelo, the Zairean superior at Mokoto, did not hesitate to take them in.

Father Dhelo knew that the displaced people were Tutsis, and that—just as in the genocide that, two years ago, left as many as a million Tutsis dead in neighboring Rwanda—they were fleeing the attacks of Hutus. These Tutsis, though, were Zaireans; their families had lived in this part of Zaire for generations, some of them before it was a Belgian colony. Most of their Hutu attackers, too, had roots in Zaire, but there were also many newcomers—members of the army and militias of Hutu Power, which carried out the genocide in their homeland, and which now dominate the internationally funded refugee camps that hug Zaire's border with Rwanda. Immediately after the genocide, more than a million Rwandan Hutus had fled to Zaire, and the militants among them soon turned the camps into bases for a guerrilla war against Rwanda. But there had been constant talk of camp closings, and since late last year Hutu Power had been recruiting, training, and arming Zairean Hutus to fight with them in a campaign to "ethnically cleanse" the two-thousand-square-mile area around Mokoto, with the apparent objective of creating a more permanent base. The success of this campaign was such that, by early this year, the area was already informally referred to throughout the region as Hutuland.

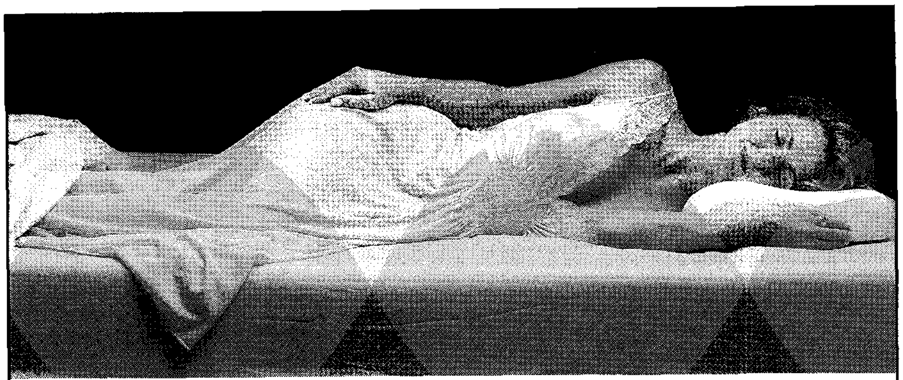
Father Dhelo knew all this, but even

when local Hutu leaders threatened to kill him for protecting the displaced Tutsis he refused to be intimidated. "I said to them that if they thought my death could solve the problem and I would die alone, I would be content to die," Father Dhelo told me. "After that, they didn't come for me." Then, in early May, Father Dhelo went away on business.

There were close to a thousand Tutsis camped around the monastery at the time. According to Father Victor Bourdeau, a French monk who had lived at Mokoto for seventeen years, a Hutu mob assembled around the camp on a Wednesday evening. Shots were fired in the air, and hundreds of Tutsis took refuge in the church. On Friday, the monastery received warning that a major attack was planned; there was no safe way to move the Tutsis out, but most of the monks were evacuated. Father Victor was one of six who stayed until Sunday, May 12th. That morning, Hutu fighters forced their way into the church, dragged some Tutsis outside, and executed them with machetes. "There was nothing to be done," Father Victor said. He and his fellow-monks fled on a tractor.

When I met the Mokoto monks, nine days after the attack, they were displaced people themselves, living in temporary quarters in Goma, thirty miles away on the Rwandan border. Father Victor, a tall, slender man with the anxious look of an ascetic, sat in his khaki cassock on a cot in a small stuffy room. "Everybody in the village was an accomplice, by silence or by looting, and it is impossible to divide the responsibility," he said. "It's like in Rwanda—one can't say all of them are guilty, but to sort it out is impossible." Father Victor had been in the Rwandan capital of Kigali on April 7, 1994, the first day of the genocide, and he told me, "It was exactly the same scenario."

MOKOTO'S isolation is such that it took three days for news of the monastery massacre to reach Kigali, where I was staying at the time. The story fit the pattern of recent events. Since early April, as many as ten thousand Tutsis had been chased out of the eastern Zairean province of North Kivu and forced to take refuge in Rwanda. The Rwandan government has accused Zaire of complicity in the expulsions, since its troops had often trucked Tutsis to the border, then confiscated or ripped up their Zairean citizenship papers. Zairean officials have invoked a much disputed and never enforced version of Zaire's



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nationality law to deny that the Tutsis had ever been Zairean citizens.

In Kigali, expressions of outrage greeted me at every government office I visited, and I was repeatedly reminded that Zaire's President, Mobutu Sese Seko, is an old friend of Rwanda's former Hutu Power leaders. He gave their regime both military and political support during the genocide, and, as Richard McCall, of the United States Agency for International Development, recently remarked, Zaire has ever since been "providing an unfettered corridor for arms shipment" to the militants who control the refugee camps. It particularly galled Rwandan officials that the international community spends more than a million dollars a day on humanitarian aid to support the refugee camps but does nothing to defuse the resident Hutu Power machine, or to hold Mobutu accountable for the actions of his genocidal guests.

Mobutu appointed himself President thirty-one years ago and is now the longest-ruling despot in Africa. During the Cold War, Western powers propped him up as a bulwark against Communist forces in central Africa; then, as their policies changed in the early nineties, they isolated him as an antidemocratic pariah. But the Rwandan genocide put Mobutu back in the spotlight—this time as the man who had to be dealt with if you wanted to deal with the refugees, a good number of whom would face arrest for crimes against humanity if they returned home. Once again, Western leaders courted him as a power broker in regional affairs. "That genocide," a European diplomat who has spent years in Africa told me, "was a gift from God for Mobutu." The Rwandan officials I spoke with believed that Mobutu, by tolerating, even encouraging, the creation of a highly militarized Hutuland in Zaire, was insuring that this gift would keep giving.

Following the massacre at the Mokoto monastery, hundreds of Tutsis managed to flee and take refuge in another Zairean village, a few miles away. I decided to find out what was to become of them, and on my way to the border, I stopped at a camp in northwestern Rwanda where recently expelled Zairean Tutsis were being held. I spoke to about a dozen men, who said that when the Hutu attacks began Zaire had sent troops and the Tutsis had expected that the troops would defend them—that Zaire would protect its own people. Instead, most of the soldiers joined in the robbing of the Tutsis, and then made the Tutsis pay them for transport to the border.

People of Rwandan ancestry—Hutus and Tutsis—have long constituted a majority in North Kivu, yet before the Rwandan genocide and the influx of refugees that followed there had never been a significant Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Zaire. The Tutsi refugees were convinced that Mobutu could restore order if he chose to. After all, his full, self-given name, Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga, has been translated as "the all-powerful warrior who, by his endurance and will to win, goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake." Nobody seemed to doubt that everything that happened in his realm was, by dint of his actions or inactions, his doing: in the end, the result will be just what he intended. Whatever that may look like, Mobutu doesn't want outsiders to see the work in progress. When I arrived at the border, I learned that Zaire was not admitting journalists. But the border guards did not know me, and the customs men who grabbed my bag never even looked in it; what they wanted was ransom, a little "pourboire," and three dollars sufficed.

ZAIRE, as a state, has long been considered a phantom construct: there is only the chief, his cronies, and his troops—a vampire élite presiding over nearly a million square miles of political and economic decay. Western visitors are forever marvelling that the place manages to survive at all. How does the center hold? A better question might be whether there is a center. Mobutu, having allowed his country to be dismantled to the brink of chaos, likes to pretend that he alone keeps it together. There may be a degree of truth in this claim, but Mobutu isn't all-powerful, and one day he will die. What worries many Zaireans even more than Zaire under Mobutu is the thought of Zaire after Mobutu.

One week after the killings at Mokoto, I drove into the combat zone of North Kivu. The road ran west from Goma, skirting a refugee camp where more than a hundred and fifty thousand Rwandans live in a sea of shanties draped with U.N.-issue blue plastic sheeting. A few miles on, the Hutu Power military command conducts its business at its own camp, and runs training exercises, without interference. The paved road ended in the town of Sake, a derelict settlement crammed with about thirty thousand people of the local Hunde minority group, who had been chased out of the hills by Hutu fighters. (Hundes, like Hutus, are mostly subsistence farmers, and the two groups' rivalry is economic and political. "Morphologically, we are the same," one Zairean Hutu observed, employing the vocabulary of nineteenth-century European "race science," which first posited Hutus as inferior to the ostensibly more noble, cattle-herding Tutsis.)

Beyond Sake, a dirt road rose sharply through the dense vegetation of a rain-soaked volcanic massif. We soon came to a clearing, and the driver gave me the name of a village. But there was no village, only the plots of land where a village had once stood, and a few charred beams, bits of smashed crockery, and sometimes a flower bed. We drove for an hour without seeing anyone—past the sacked homes of Hundes and the abandoned homes of Hutus, many of whom were said to have taken refuge with the Rwandans in the camps. The devastation was complete, except for carefully tilled fields of vegetables, their greenery iridescent beneath low dark clouds that occasionally dumped a few minutes of bright rain.

Along steep, rutted switchbacks, the irregular hills tilted at obscure angles, opening at times into deep ravines with tumbling cataracts, then closing in with a forest of eucalyptus. It was a landscape well worth fighting for, but I couldn't understand the endless procession of desolated villages. When you expel people and conquer their territory, don't you occupy it? Weren't these hills supposed to be packed with Hutus? Or was the land just being held for the day when the camps close? When, at last, we came to a village with a few people—Hutus and Zairean soldiers—my driver didn't think it advisable to stop and ask what their long-term strategy was.

At the top of the escarpment, the forests fell back, and the vast alpine pastures of Tutsi herdsmen opened out, rolling over the domes of the hills and folding into the valleys. There weren't any Tutsis, and there weren't any cattle. After four hours on the deserted road, we reached Kitchanga, the village where the Tutsis who fled from Mokoto had found temporary refuge. A small crowd stood outside a shack to buy pieces of a freshly butchered cow. The animal, too, had come from Mokoto—"rescued," villagers said, from the monastery's dairy—and there was suddenly so much beef in town that ten dollars could buy almost thirty pounds of it.

But ten dollars was not enough to buy

a Tutsi his life: the going rate for transport to the border was between twelve and fifteen dollars. The Tutsis who had been attacked at Mokoto, eight hundred of whom were now packed into a sodden and steaming thatch schoolhouse in Kitchanga, were too poor to pay for their own "ethnic cleansing."

THREE days after the attack at Mokoto, a relief team from Doctors Without Borders drove up to the monastery and found the road blocked by two charred, naked corpses; the hands, feet, and genitals had been cut off, the chests had been opened, and the hearts had been removed. The relief workers counted ten corpses and smelled many more, and they estimated the total number of dead to be around a hundred. While they were at the monastery, some wounded Tutsis came out of the bush where they had been hiding. One was a naked boy who had contrived to cover only the back of his neck. When he let the covering fall, they saw that his head had been cut almost halfway off, exposing his spine and a patch of cranium.

A doctor had sewed the boy back together, and I saw him walking tentatively around an emergency field hospital at Kitchanga. A barefoot man in a tattered raincoat and shorts at the village school, who identified himself as "the captain of the Mokoto refugees," explained that some of his people had been able to flee when "the attackers, seeing others pillage, forgot killing to steal, and only came back later." No one could count on being so lucky again. The captain told me that the Hutu Power militias who participated in the attack chanted "Kill, kill, kill" and said, "This is how we fled our country." Unlike the Zairean Tutsi refugees I had met in Rwanda, who said their only home was in Zaire, the captain of the Mokoto Tutsis had given up. He said, "We want to go home," and he meant to Rwanda. "We have no nationality here."

The hereditary Hunde chief of Kitchanga, a stout man in a brown velvet shirt, wire-rimmed spectacles, and a white baseball cap, agreed. "Truly, the Hutus want to exterminate all the Tutsis," he told me. His own people were having a hard enough time protecting themselves: their fighters included boys of six and seven, and their arsenal consisted largely of spears, bows and arrows, and homemade rifles that fired nails. Kitchanga, which was formerly home to a mixed population of about two thousand, was now an exclusively Hunde stronghold, whose ranks had been swollen by an influx of thirty-six thousand of the displaced. (The United Nations now estimates that about half the population of the main combat zone of North Kivu have been displaced from their homes.) The Hunde chief, who was drinking banana beer in his "office"—a gazebo made of U.N. plastic sheeting—told me that Kitchanga, by giving shelter to Tutsis, was a magnet for a Hutu attack; he wanted the Tutsis out of there.

The Tutsis had to be evacuated or they would be killed. The problem was that the way to the border ran through Hutuland and past the camps. The word in Kitchanga was that the International Organization for Migration, an intergovernmental agency, had promised to come with a convoy of trucks, accompanied by hired Zairean soldiers for security, to take the Tutsis away. But nobody really trusted that this would happen.

DURING the night, in Kitchanga, I heard the distant pop of gunfire, and in the morning heavy fighting between Hutus and Hundes was reported north of the village. I was told to return to Goma. As I left, three fat pillars of smoke were rising across the valley. Hunde fighters, my driver said, were sacking a Hutu village. Along the road, displaced Hundes were marching toward Kitchanga—women with armchairs bound to their backs, men toting troughs for brewing banana beer, children laden with salvaged lumber, and a slender young man with a spear in one hand and a double bed on his head.

On my return to Goma, I learned that it was true that the International Organization for Migration had planned an evacuation convoy to rescue the Tutsis in Kitchanga, but that the plan had been scrapped. I.O.M.'s mandate does not permit it to assist the "internally displaced" in crossing international borders. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the dozens of other humanitarian organizations that hold the lucrative catering contracts for the refugee camps around Goma all have similar limitations in their mandates, which prevented them from saving the Mokoto survivors. Most aid organizations, in fact, do not have a mandate to transport anybody, and can only provide "relief" on the spot; others are forbidden to conduct operations that involve armed security; still others maintain that it would be a violation of their ostensible neutrality to further the aims of "ethnic cleansing" by removing Tutsis just because Hutus threatened them. "It's not a problem of money," an officer of the International Committee of the Red Cross told me. "It's a problem of politics."

Individual aid workers I spoke with agreed that it is more humane to "ethnically cleanse" people than to leave them to die. But it became clear that their organizations' first commitment was not to protect-

"And Thursday is karaoke night."

"I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said. I was listening to my body."

ing people but to protecting their mandates. "Everything is lies here," Father Victor, the Mokoto monk, told me. "All these organizations—they will give blankets, food, yes. But to save the lives—no, they can't."

On May 24th, in New York, Rwanda's Ambassador to the United Nations called on the Security Council to "take immediate action to prevent genocide in Eastern Zaire." Rwanda's request referred to the Mokoto massacre and the Tutsis at Kitchanga. The Zairean Mission to the U.N. countered that the conflict in North Kivu was "a completely internal situation," and was therefore none of the Security Council's business. The government of Zaire denied any problem pertaining to "[Rwandan]-speaking Zairean nationals," maintaining, absurdly, that "of the languages spoken in Zaire, [Rwandan] is not one of them." What's more, Zaire advised the Council that "the word 'genocide' is not a part of its political landscape."

At the end of May, more than a thousand Tutsis were evacuated from Kitchanga to the Rwandan border under a private initiative that is believed to have been organized by local businessmen. Throughout June and July, Tutsi refugees continued to arrive in Rwanda, and as the fighting spread in eastern Zaire Tutsis also began fleeing to Uganda, farther north. The eradication of Tutsis from North Kivu is now believed to be nearly complete.

WESTERN leaders say they are eager to avoid further violence in central Africa. The record so far lends their statements a distinct ring of bad faith. Hutu Power's ideology is, basically, to kill, and its guerrilla war against Rwanda has now taken the form of almost daily gun battles along the Zairean border and inside Rwandan territory. In the past six months, these incursions have increasingly targeted Tutsi genocide survivors. The organization African Rights has described this effort by Hutu Power to complete the crime of two years ago as "killing the evidence."

Yet, while top officials of U.S.A.I.D. have been saying "the genocide continues," and United States intelligence sources have been identifying Mobutu's government as a chief source of arms for the Hutu rebels who have helped to drive Rwanda's southern neighbor, Burundi, to nearly total destruction, an American diplomat told me that it was important to cultivate Mobutu as a regional peacemaker. "Occasionally," he said, "you have to dance with the Devil to do the Lord's work." The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, which is running at a severe deficit in the region, as well as the United States and many of the European powers, who are tired of paying for the camps in Zaire, like to speak of the urgent need to relocate the refugees away from the border and to sort out the militants from the general population. Still, after two years no action has been taken. And the Hutus have little incentive to leave. In the camps most enjoy a better diet, better health care, and—for those employed by aid agencies—much higher wages than they would in Rwanda, which, in the aftermath of the genocide, has been rated by the World Bank as the poorest country on earth.

Late last month, in southern Rwanda, I watched as convoys of I.O.M. trucks brought tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutus home from refugee camps in Burundi. U.N. observers described the repatriation as voluntary. In Zaire, where there are few such volunteers, the chief obstacle to a comparable repatriation is Hutu Power's ability to intimidate not only the camp populations but also the entire international community.

The Western powers made it clear two years ago that they do not care to fight genocide in central Africa, but they have yet to give a convincing explanation of why they are content to feed it. The appeasement of Rwanda's genocidal forces under the mantle of humanitarianism has served to prolong, and even to aggravate, the crisis it is meant to alleviate. International law, after all, defines refugees as people fleeing persecution, not—as is the case with the militant leaders who dominate the camps in Zaire—prosecution, and the false promise of protection represented by the camps places Hutu civilians as well as Tutsis in mortal peril. It is no comfort for either population that this state of affairs was brought about not by a malevolent international policy in central Africa but by the lack of any coherent policy.

RWANDAN and Burundian adherents of Hutu Power's ideology of extermination, operating with Mobutu's complicity, now control a sickle-shaped band of Zairean territory hooked around Rwanda's western frontier, from which, with steadily enhanced armaments, they freely exploit their numerical advantage to seek soft spots for invasion into both countries. In Washington, the prospect of a further destabilization of the region has triggered an election-year panic attack at the State Department and the National Security Council. Instead of taking action against Hutu Power and its sponsors, however, American policymakers are scrambling to insure deniability if the untenable status quo crumbles. At an interagency meeting this summer, one member of the Clinton Administration is reported to have said that the main priority in Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire is that "we don't want to look like chumps."

Colonel Joseph Karemera, Rwanda's Minister of Health, told me last year that he sometimes thinks that "the international community is looking at us like from a different generation of human evolution." And recently, in Kigali, General Paul Kagame, the Vice-President and Minister of Defense, told me that he has learned a great deal from "the kind of unfairness, the kind of hypocrisy and double standards, on the part of the people who claim that they want to shape this world into a good place for everyone." It bothers General Kagame that there are those in his own government who say he did not really win the war against Hutu Power in 1994. "This is how you win wars," he told me. "You win the wars by winning the battles put together." And he added, "What remains is to turn around and fight another war."

In an apparent bid to prevent such a war, or to force the crisis, Zaire's Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, visited Kigali two weeks ago and announced that Zaire plans to close the Rwandan camps and send the refugees home "immediately." But Rwanda's Deputy Minister of Justice, Gerald Gahima, told me that Kengo "can only deliver what Mobutu wants him to," and Mobutu, who spent the last weeks of August visiting his doctors in Switzerland, has so far remained silent. Understandably, the Rwandan journalists at Kengo's press conference in Kigali did not bother asking much about the details of a repatriation program they hardly believed in. They wanted to know what Zaire proposed to do about its own refugees, the expelled citizens of North Kivu who remain in camps in Rwanda. Kengo, whose name at birth was Leon Lubitsch—his father was a Pole, and his maternal grandmother was herself a Rwandan immigrant to Zaire—replied that only those people who can prove that their ancestors were living on Zairean territory in 1885, when it was defined by the European colonial powers at Berlin, are entitled to Zairean citizenship. But he said he would keep the question under consideration. ♦

ANSWERS TO HARD QUESTIONS

[*From the Boston Globe*]

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ANNALS OF LAW

THE MARCIA CLARK VERDICT

Juries had always liked Marcia Clark, but she lost the biggest case of her career because the one in Judge Ito's courtroom didn't. Why did she so badly misread this jury and the clues that might have helped her win?

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

MARCIA CLARK'S most celebrated case before she prosecuted O. J. Simpson involved the murder of a twenty-one-year-old actress named Rebecca Schaeffer. As a star of a nineteen-eighties situation comedy called "My Sister Sam," Schaeffer had drawn the interest of an obsessive fan named Robert Bardo. Over the years, Bardo had trailed the pop singer Debbie Gibson and visited the spot in New York City where Mark David Chapman shot John Lennon, and in 1987 Bardo started stalking Schaeffer. He followed her surreptitiously, sent her letters, and even hired a private detective to get her home address. Then, on July 18, 1989, Bardo rang the doorbell at Schaeffer's home, and when she answered shot her dead with a .357 magnum.

By that time, Marcia Clark had been a prosecutor in Los Angeles for eight years, and her career had been characterized, in part, by an unusually attentive interest in the victims of the crimes she was prosecuting. Clark met Rebecca's mother, Danna, on the day after the murder and spoke to her after almost every court appearance in the two years before the trial. Finally, as the trial was set to begin, in September of 1991, Danna Schaeffer received a three-page letter from Clark, handwritten on a yellow legal pad.

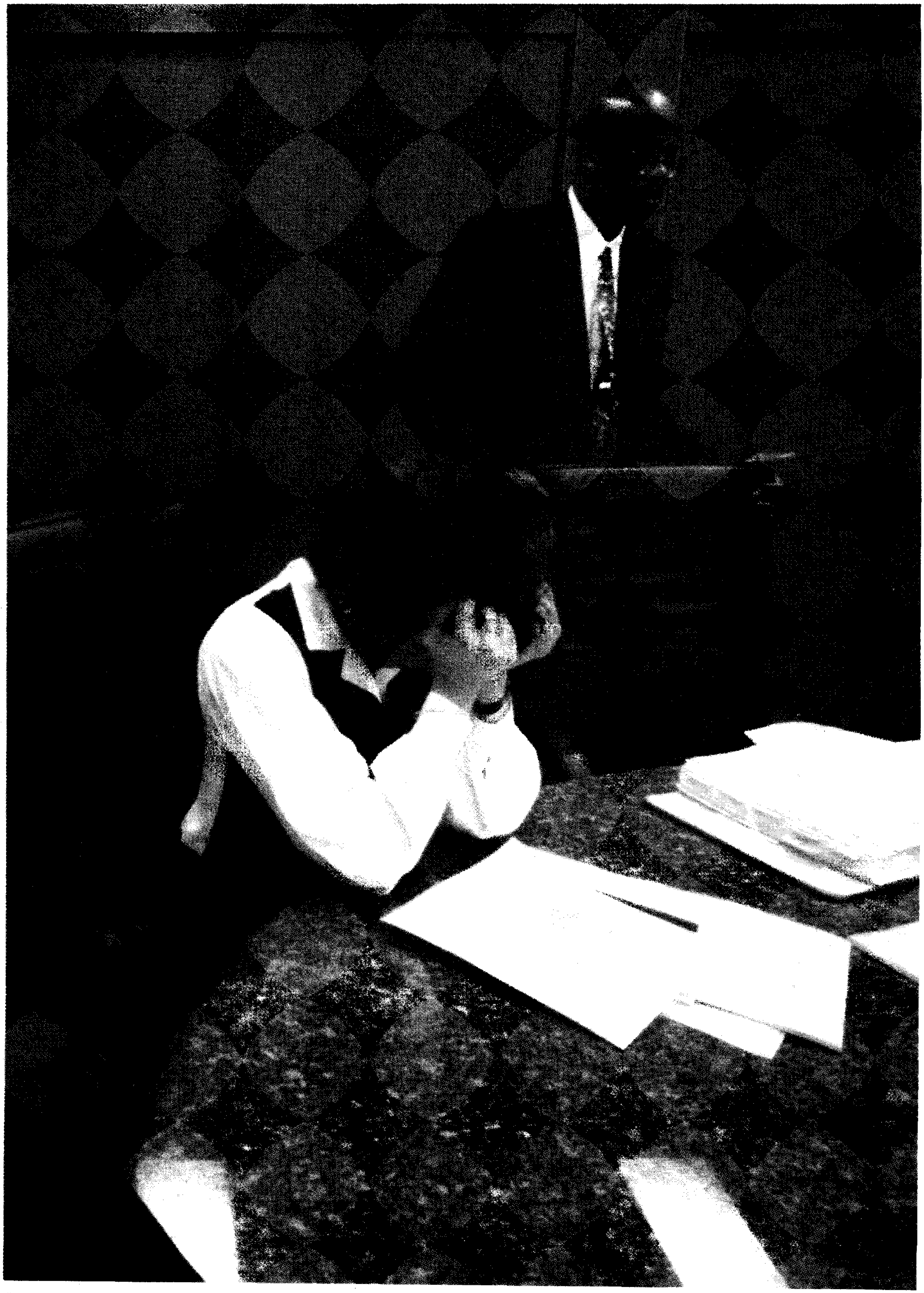
"Even as I'm writing this I'm crying again—as I feared, once you start letting yourself feel, it's an endless thing," Clark wrote. "If all goes well the miserable, slimy piece of cow dung will be convicted of everything. I can offer only that I will do everything in my power to see that her loss is avenged—I cannot promise justice because to me justice would mean Rebecca is alive and her murderer is dead." She concluded, "The one thing I can promise you is that when this is all over I will honestly be able to tell you that I gave it my all, my very best, without reservation. Beyond that you have my love and my empathy forever."

This passionate, morally indignant style was apparent in the courtroom, too. Clark prosecuted some of the most despicable people to pass through the California judicial system—drug dealers out to settle scores, scorned lovers bent on vicious revenge. In this respect, Bardo was typical of her cases, and he was convicted and sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. Sometimes the defendants were almost cartoonishly evil. In Clark's last major murder case before Simpson, she prosecuted two men who shot to death a pair of parishioners in the middle of a church service in south-central Los Angeles, and one of the defendants assaulted his own lawyer in the middle of the trial—in front of the jury. Still, Clark always made an effort to keep the focus on the victims, even when a jury might not normally expect to identify with them. In 1992, she tried a double-murder case that grew out of a drug deal gone bad. Even though the victims were involved in the drug business themselves, Clark used the trial to re-create the last twenty minutes of their lives, when they were tied up in the trunk of a car, clawing futilely at the lock as they awaited their execution. "It was the most harrowing thing I ever saw in a courtroom," a defense attorney in the case told me.

Many of Clark's trials took place "downtown"—in the Criminal Courts Building in Los Angeles, that is—and she felt a great affinity for the jurors, many of them black or Latino, who were selected there. Indeed, she believed that she had developed a special rapport with one group in particular—black women. In case after case, she saw their smiles, their nods, their sympathy. Often, after a trial, Clark would speak to jurors, and the ones who always gave her the warmest greetings were the African-American women. She even had a fan club of sorts consisting of a group of former jurors, all black women, who wrote letters to her and otherwise kept in touch with her after their trials ended.

These, then, were Marcia Clark's lessons from a successful career: that murder cases had to be prosecuted with intensity and a sense of righteousness; that jurors needed to be reminded of the humanity and the suffering of victims; and that black women, specifically, would feel a strong kinship with those victims and with Clark herself. These tenets were honorable as well as winning, so it was not surprising that Clark sought to apply them when she was assigned to prosecute O. J. Simpson.

But what succeeded in other cases could not succeed in the unique circumstances of the Simpson trial. Indeed, all of Clark's strategies worked against her in the courtroom of Judge Lance Ito. The jurors ignored the victims, and black women showed disdain for the prosecution. Clark lost the Simpson case because she did not take into account the defense team's success in changing the subject to race. Through the unrelenting efforts of the Simpson lawyers, race came to matter more than the evidence. And by focussing exclusively on the evidence



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"It was premeditated murder": Marcia Clark with Christopher Darden in a meeting about jury selection. Photograph by Roger E. Sandler.

Clark completely misjudged the symbolic power of the defense's race-based strategy for the jury that decided the case.

SIMPSON was arrested on Friday, June 17, 1994, after the famous low-speed chase along Southern California freeways, and he was arraigned the following Monday on charges of murdering Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. The prosecution's press conference after the arraignment served as the public's introduction to Marcia Clark. At the beginning of a case, most prosecutors evince a serious, untheatrical interest in getting down to business. Clark chose a different approach. She is a formidable extemporaneous public speaker, and on June 20th there was no mistaking the sincerity of her passions or the firmness of her beliefs. Addressing the cameras from a podium set up on the first floor of the Criminal Courts Building, Clark did not even pay lip service to such legal niceties as the presumption of innocence. She was, if anything, more categorical than her boss, District Attorney Gil Garcetti, had been in his earlier statements about the accused man. Although just three days had passed since Simpson's arrest—and only eight days since the murders—Clark said, "It was premeditated murder. . . . It was done with deliberation and premeditation. That is precisely what he is charged with, because that is what we will prove." Thus, in a single breath Clark wrote off the possibility of arguing that Simpson murdered his ex-wife in a fit of jealous rage—a perfectly reasonable theory of the case. Asked about the possibility of accomplices, she replied, "Mr. Simpson is charged alone because he is the sole murderer."

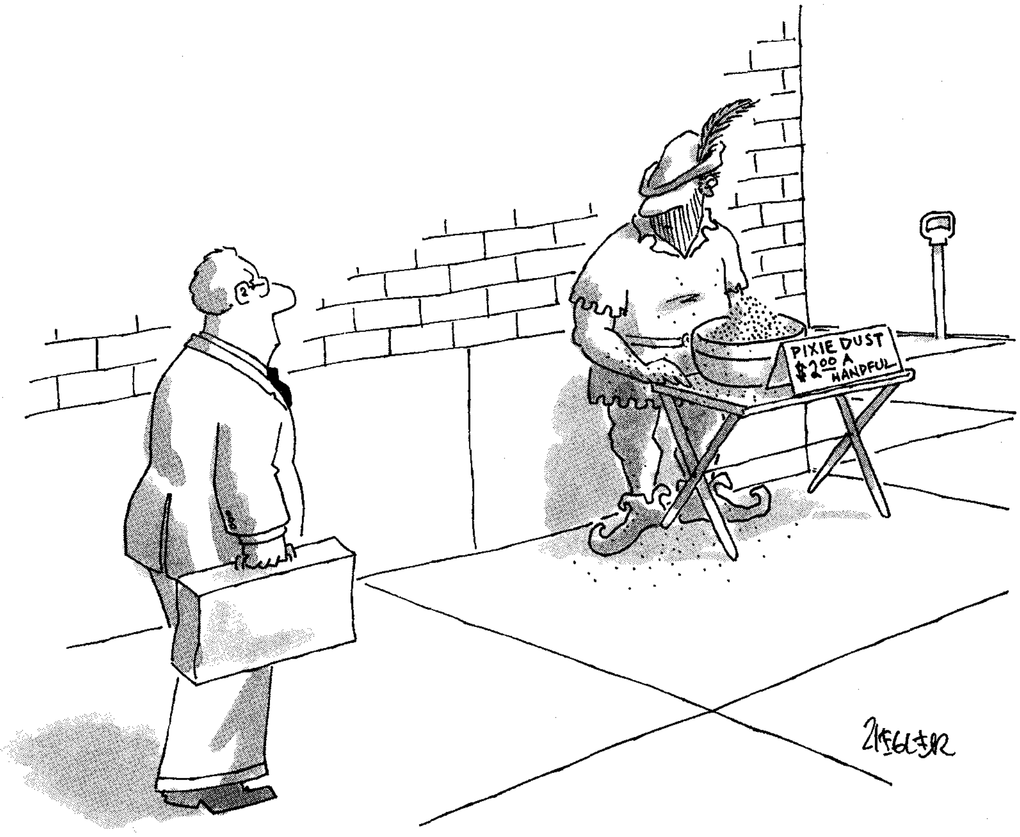
In her personal life, too, Clark displayed passion and impetuosity. She was born Marcia Rachel Kleks on August 31, 1953, in Berkeley, California. Her father, Abraham, is an Israeli-born chemist who worked for the Food and Drug Administration, and her mother, Roslyn, is a Brooklynite who worked for a Los Angeles County supervisor. Kleks was transferred frequently when Marcia was a girl: five years in Los Angeles, four near San Francisco, one in Detroit, one near Washington, D.C., two in New York City, and a final move back to Los Angeles, just before Marcia went to college. During her first year in college, her parents became aware that Marcia was suffering from bulimia, an affliction that she has battled periodically for more than twenty years.

After a year at the University of California at Riverside, Marcia entered U.C.L.A. in 1972. While she was still an undergraduate, she met her first husband, a dashing young immigrant from Israel named Gaby Horowitz, who made his living as a professional backgammon player. They married shortly after she graduated, in 1974, without telling Marcia's parents first. In 1979, the year Marcia graduated from law school, she told her parents that she was divorcing Gaby. A short time later, she announced that she was marrying Gordon Clark, who was twenty-two, five years her junior.

"Nothing important—nothing on fax, nothing on voice mail, nothing on the Internet. Just, you know, handwritten stuff."

The Clarks had two sons—one in 1990 and the other in 1992—but their marriage didn't last, either. In August of 1993, ten months before she was assigned to the Simpson case, Marcia Clark turned forty and made a series of dramatic changes in her life. First, she asked that a promotion she had received to a supervisory position in the district attorney's office be rescinded, because she wanted to return to her old job—that of a trial lawyer. She craved the excitement and drama of trials. In December of that year, she told Gordon that she wanted a divorce. "He's not for me," she told her father, in Hebrew. Then, Marcia's parents say, about a month after Gordon moved out, Marcia told them that she felt they had been unsupportive; she forbade them to see her sons and said that she never wanted to speak to them again. Neither Gordon nor her parents had had any hint of Marcia's plans.

Ultimately, no outsider can fully understand the origin or the effect of such family strife. And here the situation is further complicated by the fact that, according to Marcia's parents, her brother, six years younger, also cut off contact with them, shortly after Marcia did. In any case, the relationship between Marcia and the Kleks grew more acrimonious as the Simpson trial approached. The Kleks had spent a great deal of time with their older grandchild, who was almost four at the time his parents separated. The second boy was just a baby, and the grandparents thought that the crisis—whatever its origin—would blow over. It never did. In September, 1994, the time of jury selection in the Simpson case, Marcia's father left a message telling her



that her mother was undergoing major surgery. Her parents say that Marcia never called back. In January, 1995, her parents visited their older grandson at his nursery school at the school director's invitation and without Marcia's knowledge. Her parents were told that when Marcia learned of it she denounced the school director to her face in a room full of people. Last week, Clark vigorously disputed this account of her health and of the incidents involving her parents, and said, "The sources should be considered unreliable."

As the trial progressed, the stresses of trying the Simpson case were compounded by Clark's divorce proceedings and the indignities of unsought celebrity. At the supermarket one day, she bought some tampons and the check-out clerk commented, "It looks like it's going to be a tough week for the defense." Then, on a day when her colleague Christopher Darden was questioning Denise Brown, Nicole's sister, the *National Enquirer* published a topless photograph of Clark that had been taken more than a decade earlier when she was in Saint-Tropez with Gaby Horowitz. She was so humiliated that she began crying quietly at the counsel table in Judge Ito's court. She scribbled a note to Scott Gordon, a prosecutor who at that moment was seated next to her. "I'm losing it," Clark wrote. Darden noticed her distress and subtly shifted his position so that the courtroom camera would be directed away from her. Thinking fast, the roly-poly Gordon jotted Clark a response: "The *Enquirer* was going to run the same pictures of me, but Greenpeace wouldn't let them do it." Clark smiled, and that crisis, at least, passed unnoticed by the public.

CLARK'S headstrong nature was never more evident than when the lawyers for both sides in the Simpson case turned to what was perhaps their most important challenge—how to identify and select the jury that would be most receptive to their case.

Robert Shapiro, who was still the lead defense attorney in the late summer of 1994, got the best person he could find to help. He hired Jo-Ellan Dimitrius, a jury consultant based near Los Angeles, whose previous clients included the defendants in the McMartin Preschool case and the police officers accused of beating Rodney King. Shapiro asked Dimitrius to conduct all the surveys and focus groups she needed to, and then promised to consult her closely when it came time to select the jurors.

The prosecutors' more tortuous route to jury selection reflected, in microcosm, the issues that beset their efforts from the start. In part, they paid a price for their high ethical standards. However, they also suffered because of their arrogance, their recurring bad luck, and, above all, their inability to address the ever-present problem of race. In particular, jury selection demonstrated Marcia Clark's peculiar mixture of virtues and flaws.

Shortly before jury selection began, the prosecutors forfeited one advantage they might have had as the case proceeded: Garcetti's office announced that it would not seek the death penalty. It is well known that so-called "death-qualified" jurors—that is, jurors who are at least willing to consider imposing the death penalty—are more likely to convict than other jurors. As a defendant without an extensive criminal past, Simpson was an unlikely candidate for the death penalty, but the prosecution team did yield an important strategic advantage when it excluded even the possibility of seeking it.

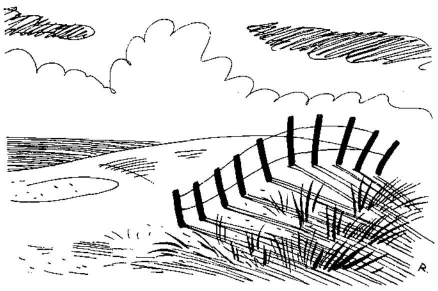
In ordinary circumstances, government lawyers do very little to prepare for jury selection in a criminal trial. Prosecutors' offices almost never have the funds to hire jury consultants, so the lawyers generally just rely on their experience and their instincts. Besides, many prosecutors find the whole notion of jury consulting distasteful. Jury consultants are the consummate cynics of the legal profession. Their approach presupposes that jurors reach verdicts on the basis of their ethnic backgrounds as much as on the evidence, and it is true that by the summer of 1994 public-opinion surveys had already shown profoundly different reactions among whites and blacks to the Simpson case. Moreover, since the Supreme Court's Batson decision, in 1986, prosecutors have been forbidden to exclude prospective jurors solely on the basis of race. In practice, many prosecutors have found ways of skirting the principle of race-neutral jury selection, but Clark and her colleagues regarded the rule as an important one. Clark believed that Simpson's history of domestic violence and the physical evidence tying him to the murder scene would outweigh any preconceptions the jurors might have brought to the trial.

However, a prominent jury consultant named Donald Vinson did volunteer his services to the prosecutors, and they decided to use him. In 1976, when Vinson was a respected, if obscure, marketing professor at the University of Southern California, he received a surprise phone call from lawyers at the firm of Cravath, Swaine & Moore. The lawyers were representing I.B.M. in a complex antitrust case, and they wondered if Vinson might apply some social-science techniques to the art of jury communication. Spurred by Cravath, Vinson developed a new field. Using the most sophisticated research techniques—including focus groups, survey research, and even the hiring of "shadow jurors," who would sit in court and give lawyers day-by-day critiques of their efforts—Vinson transformed the way well-heeled trial lawyers prepare for court. He quit U.S.C., founded a company called Litigation Sciences, made it into the leader in the field, and, in 1987, sold out for many millions of dollars to Saatchi & Saatchi, the advertising agency. Four years later, when a non-compete agreement he had signed expired, he created a new firm, called DecisionQuest. By the time of the Simpson trial, Vinson employed two hundred people and was seeking bigger challenges.

Vinson had been appalled when, in January of 1994, the first trial of Lyle and Erik Menendez on charges of murdering their parents ended in hung juries. Perhaps immodestly, he felt that this failure of the district attorney's office reflected—in part, at least—government prosecutors' lack of access to experts like him. Vinson believed that even a temporary escape of such obviously guilty figures as the Menendez brothers brought the whole judicial system into disrepute. He discussed the situation with his friend John Martel, a novelist and prominent civil lawyer in San Francisco, and the two men decided to volunteer their services for the second Menendez trial. That March, they met with Gil Garcetti and David Conn, who would be leading the retrial, and the prosecutors accepted Vinson's offer. After an initial round of focus groups, both Garcetti and Conn became big boosters of Vinson's work, and they touted him to Clark. Vinson agreed to take on another pro-bono project, and Clark said, reluctantly, that she would see what he had to offer.

On July 23, 1994, Vinson organized a research exercise at the Plaza Research Corporation, which had offices in a building near the Los Angeles airport. DecisionQuest recruited thirty "jurors" to determine initial jury reaction to fact patterns in the case. Clark had videotaped a twenty-minute version of a prosecution opening statement in the trial, and Bill Hodgman—Clark's fellow trial counsel at the time—acting as one of Simpson's lawyers, had taped a statement on behalf of the defense. The plan was to play both statements for the "jurors" and listen to their reactions. Clark worried that word of the experiment might leak, however, and asked that her tape not be played. Instead, while the mock jury waited, John Martel listened to Clark's tape and then paraphrased it for a camera on the afternoon of the exercise. So the group actually heard Martel and Hodgman.

Clark, Hodgman, and Garcetti watched the jurors from behind a pane of one-way glass. The results were astonishing. DecisionQuest had recruited a diverse group; in one panel, for example, there were five men and five women, six whites and four blacks. Everyone expected at least some ethnic correlation in the results, but the racial divide in this test was stark and overwhelming: whites for conviction, blacks for acquittal. What was more, the partisans on both sides held their views unswervingly. After the initial votes, Vinson spoke with the black jurors in an effort to learn what might change their minds about Simpson's guilt. As an experiment, he asked them to change two assumptions about the facts of the case: to assume, first, that it was a hundred per cent certain that the blood to the left of the footprints at the Bundy Drive murder scene was that of O. J. Simpson, and, second, that scientific tests on the glove found at the crime scene positively identified the skin oils on the inside as Simpson's. This was practically a specific instruction to convict. No matter. Three of the four blacks still said they would vote not guilty.



There was more. Vinson questioned the black women on the panel closely about the issue of domestic violence. He asked them to assume that Simpson had beaten Nicole, and had also threatened and stalked her. Their reactions were uniform:

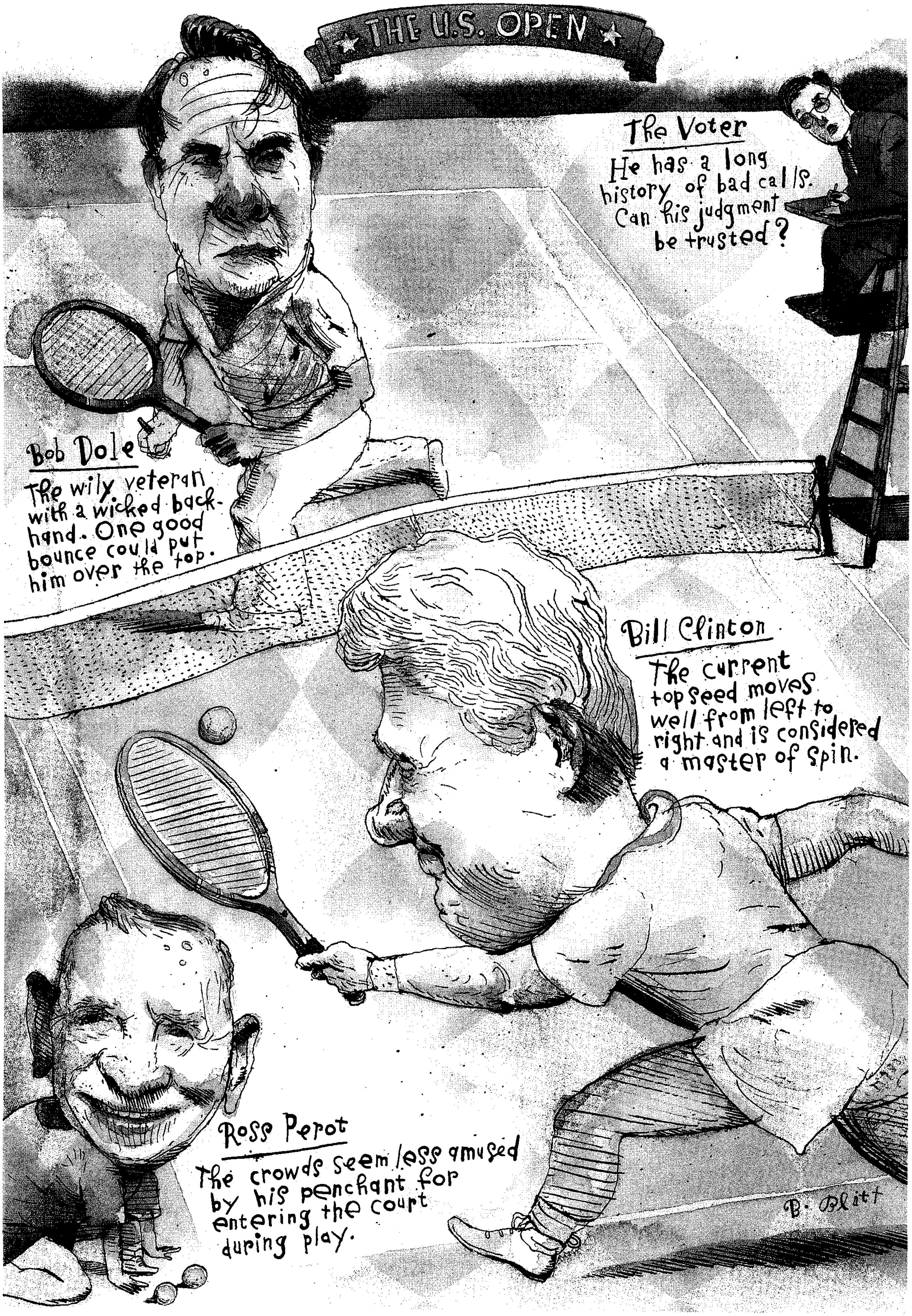
"In every relationship, there's always a little trouble."

"People get slapped around. That just happens."

"It doesn't mean he killed her."

Clark seemed to dislike the whole exercise—the process, the answers, and Vinson. A fastidious man with close-cropped gray hair, a Ph.D. who liked being addressed as "Doctor," Vinson spoke with a quiet assurance that his words were worth the millions that major corporations and law firms paid for them, but Clark seemed to regard him as a patronizing snob. Vinson thought little better of Clark, regarding her as a narrow-minded civil servant who preferred courthouse bromides to solid information. Neither view was entirely wrong, but Clark's failure to heed Vinson's recommendations had disastrous consequences for her case.

Prodded by Garcetti, Clark reluctantly agreed to a more detailed follow-up to the July 23rd research exercise. Understanding Clark's fear of leaks in the frenzied atmosphere of Los Angeles, Vinson proposed that they move the next research session to Phoenix, a city where he could find demographically comparable jurors. According to Vinson, he even offered to arrange for a private plane to fly Hodgman and Clark out of the city, so they wouldn't have to worry that reporters might learn of their trip. The prosecutors refused the plane,


THE U.S. OPEN
The Voter
He has a long history of bad calls. Can his judgment be trusted?
Bob Dole
The wily veteran with a wicked backhand. One good bounce could put him over the top.
Bill Clinton
The current top seed moves well from left to right and is considered a master of spin.
Ross Perot
The crowds seem less amused by his penchant for entering the court during play.
B. Blitt

he says, but did agree to go to Phoenix and hear more about how prospective jurors might react to their case.

Clark and Hodgman met at the Burbank airport late on the afternoon of August 18th for the flight to Phoenix, just about an hour away. (Vinson and his colleagues flew from a different airport.) Rushing to catch the plane, Clark came to an abrupt stop in front of the airport metal detector.

"Oh, my God," she said. "I've got my gun."

Because of Clark's high public profile, the detectives on the case had prevailed upon her to start carrying a gun, and she had forgotten to leave it behind when she headed for the airport. Hodgman ran ahead to the gate to try to hold the plane. The airport police told Clark that she would have to fill out a federal form if she wanted to be allowed to travel by air with the gun. A security official searched for the right form, but Clark and Hodgman missed their flight. They stewed in an airport lounge until the official with the form arrived; he was followed by a reporter and a photographer from the *National Enquirer*. By the time Clark and Hodgman caught another flight and made it to their hotel, in a suburb of Phoenix, they were frazzled and exhausted, and the press was demanding to know what business they had in Phoenix.

John Martel, who got along better with Clark than Vinson did, persuaded her to continue with at least part of the project. Martel proposed that, instead of having the lawyers make presentations to the mock jurors, the participants simply be asked what they thought about the case so far. That way, there was less to leak. It would just be a survey of the media impact on the case. Reluctantly, Clark agreed to listen.

The following day's session involved seventeen "jurors," again divided more or less evenly along gender and racial lines. As in the initial research session in Los Angeles, the racial divisions proved to be nearly absolute, with black women backing the defendant most intensely. The detailed questions revealed even more shocking disparities. Vinson asked the jurors to rate everyone in the case on a scale of one to ten, basing their vote on how much sympathy they felt for each participant. From the black women, O. J. Simpson received all nines and tens. Nicole Brown Simpson—a murder victim—scored sevens, fives, and threes. Then the questions turned to the jurors' impressions of the lawyers. The black participants almost uniformly described Robert Shapiro as "smart" and "clever," while the reactions to Clark were scathing. She sat in an adjacent conference room and observed a closed-circuit video feed as black women—*her* jurors, she had thought—described her:

"Shifty."

"Strident."

"Bitch."

"Bitch."

"Bitch."

Several of these mock jurors spent much of the following week giving interviews—on the "Today" show, on CNN, and elsewhere—in which they talked at length about how unpersuasive the prosecution's "evidence" had been, even though none had been presented to them. Thus, the impression persisted that there had been some sort of prosecution failure in Phoenix.

With jury selection just a few weeks away, the prosecutors had to take stock. Between the initial research exercise, the Phoenix focus group, and a telephone survey conducted in Los Angeles by DecisionQuest, there had been no ambiguity in the results: African-Americans remained convinced of Simpson's innocence, with black women his strongest supporters. According to the telephone poll, black men were three times as likely as black women to believe that Simpson was guilty. Moreover, black women responding by phone felt overwhelmingly that, even if Simpson had engaged in a pattern of violence against Nicole, doing so didn't make him more likely to have killed her. According to the telephone poll, an alarmingly large number of black women felt that the use of physical force was not inappropriate in a marriage. And black women, especially, could not abide Marcia Clark.

On the eve of jury selection, Clark had all this to consider—the focus groups, the telephone survey, the demo-

BEFORE THE MIRROR

How many of us still remember
when Picasso's "Girl Before a Mirror" hung
at the turning of the stairs in the pre-
expansion Museum of Modern Art?
Millions of us, probably, but we form
a dwindling population. Garish
and brush-slashed and yet as balanced
as a cardboard Queen in a deck of giant cards,
the painting proclaimed, "Enter here
and abandon preconception." She bounced
the erotic balls of herself back and forth
between reflection and reality.

Now I discover, in the recent re-
trospective at the same establishment,
that the vivid painting dates
from March of 1932,
the very month in which I first saw light,
squinting in nostalgia for the womb.
I bend closer, inspecting. The blacks,
the stripy cyanide greens are still uncracked,
I note with satisfaction; the cherry reds
and lemon yellows full of childish juice.
No sag, no wrinkle. Fresh as paint. Back then
they knew just how, I reflect, to lay it on.

—JOHN UPDIKE

graphic analyses, the whole jury-consultant package. She also knew black women—and she knew that they were disproportionately victims of domestic violence themselves. As far as this case went, Nicole Brown Simpson was really one of them. Clark made up her mind: Don Vinson could go to hell. She was relying on her gut.

Lance Ito forgot to turn on his microphone when he took the bench on Monday, September 26, 1994—a small sign that the usually meticulous judge had the jitters on the first day of jury selection.

Ito had arranged for a huge pool of potential jurors to be brought forward for the Simpson case—around nine hundred. The prosecution had taken the unusual step of asking that the jury in this case be sequestered. The nine hundred potential jurors had filled out brief questionnaires for this first portion of jury selection, called the hardship phase. The individuals provided basic demographic information and explained why service in the case would be a hardship for them. This initial group provided a fair approximation of the jury pool in the downtown Los Angeles area. There were roughly equal numbers of men and women; 28.1 per cent were African-American; 37.9 per cent were Caucasian; and the remainder were divided among Latinos, Asians, and others. (Over all, the downtown jury pool is about thirty-one per cent African-American and thirty per cent Caucasian.) The collection of potential jurors was a fairly well-educated group: nearly three-quarters of them had some college education or were college graduates.

The purpose of the hardship phase was to determine which jurors had irreconcilable personal conflicts with jury service and which ones would go on to the next round of inquiries. As it turned out, Ito was a soft touch. Anyone who wanted to get out got out. Of the two hundred and nineteen potential jurors who arrived on the first day, Ito excused about ninety solely on the basis of their questionnaires. Most said that their employers would not pay them during long jury service or that their personal situations made such service impossible. The judge and the lawyers and Simpson then retreated into a small anteroom to question those potential jurors whose hardship answers were ambiguous. Deirdre Robertson, Ito's clerk, drew the number of the first juror to be questioned.

"Number thirty-two," she said.

Ito smiled, for this had been Simpson's number throughout his football career. "I don't know if this is an omen," the judge quipped, and the defendant nodded eagerly.

The hardship phase of jury selection took only four days—less time than anyone had expected. To Ito's surprise, many people seemed more than willing to be on the jury. By Thursday, September 29th, the judge had assembled a pool of three hundred and four willing citizens, from which the twelve jurors and twelve alternates would be selected.

The lawyers on both sides spent the next two weeks poring over the answers of prospective jurors to a much more elaborate questionnaire that Judge Ito had handed out to them. As the prosecutors digested the vast collection of answers, they learned one important thing. The hardship process had acted like a vacuum cleaner for educated jurors, white jurors, and male jurors—all groups that showed a predisposition in favor of the prosecution. A little less than a third of the original pool of nine hundred consisted of African-Americans. In the group that remained in the process at this second questionnaire stage, that number jumped to about half. And three-quarters of the black prospective jurors were female—the most pro-Simpson group of all.

The lawyers had their chance to meet the prospective jurors on October 12th, when the voir dire—individual questioning of prospective jurors—began. As the defense lawyers started asking questions, one theme stood out. In question after question, Johnnie Cochran made sure the prospective jurors knew that this was a case about race. On the very first day of questioning, Cochran established a pattern of inquiries that he would return to throughout the long process ahead.

"Now, with regard to other aspects of answers that you gave us," Cochran said to a white candidate, "on the question of whether or not you felt the issue of discrimination against African-Americans, you said you felt it was a serious one, is that correct?"

"Yeah," the man said.

"That was based upon your experiences

"Please ask the people at the next table to stop talking about smoking."

and what you have observed and what you have seen yourself, is that correct?"

"Yeah."

"All right," Cochran went on. "Now, with regard to the whole question of race, interracial marriage, you felt you had no problems with that, is that correct?"

And so it went, day after day. Many prospective jurors seemed to be auditioning for service on the case. And some of them were in all likelihood lying, too. According to Vinson's telephone survey, about sixty per cent of all respondents said they had formed at least some opinion about the guilt or innocence of O. J. Simpson. But among those who answered the questionnaires, according to Vinson's analysis, only twenty-three per cent said they had formed at least some opinion. Either the prospective jurors were an especially impartial group or—more likely—they were being disingenuous in order to get into the jury box.

In jury selection, as in the rest of the case, Simpson's lawyers coördinated their courtroom and public-relations strategies, and the prosecution was at a loss about how to respond. On October 27th, Bill Hodgman sharply questioned an elderly black man whose answers demonstrated that he had grievances against the Los Angeles Police Department. Hodgman was doing what any responsible prosecutor would have done—that is, using this prospective juror's voir dire to lay the groundwork for a request to have him excused for cause. The process clearly irritated the prospective juror, and he said to the even-tempered prosecutor, "You are sort of riling me." During a break in that day's court session, the defense launched an attack on Hodgman. Cochran went from Ito's courtroom, on the ninth floor, to the media center, on the twelfth floor, and there held an impromptu news conference. "We're really concerned about the tenor of the questions and the way they go after certain jurors," Cochran said.

As Cochran was speaking upstairs, Shapiro addressed the rest of the reporters, assembled in the courthouse lobby. Of Hodgman's questioning, Shapiro said, "It implies an insidious effort to try to get black jurors removed for cause because they are black, because they have black heroes, and because O. J. Simpson is one of them. There's no other reason." The lawyers' salvos led the local news that evening, and they also paid off in a front-page headline in the next day's Los Angeles *Times:* "PROSECUTORS TARGETING BLACK JURORS, SIMPSON TEAM SAYS."

"Well, it has been a great summer for chanterelles."

Finally, the day came when the parties were to begin exercising their peremptory challenges; that is, to remove prospective jurors without having to offer reasons. Each side had twenty challenges. For the defense, Jo-Ellan Dimitrius was consulted continually by Shapiro and Cochran; she had been in the courtroom for every moment of jury selection, and the lawyers huddled with her about each decision. Dimitrius had put the key findings of her research in a memorandum to the defense team, headed "General Considerations for Jury Selection." Under the heading "Most Preferred Jurors" Dimitrius listed the following attributes: "Young; Less Educated; Blue Collar; African American; No Prior Jury Service; Lower Income." (These were, predictably, the mirror image of Vinson's findings.) Cochran and Shapiro hewed closely to her suggestions.

Clark, for her part, had allowed Vinson to sit in court for only a day and a half of jury selection, and had then informed him that his advice was no longer needed. On December 8th, the two sides exercised the last of their challenges and accepted the panel of twelve jurors and twelve alternates. The panel's ethnic profile represented a stunning divergence from that of the group that originally reported for duty—and an even more striking difference from that of Los Angeles County as a whole. Of the twenty-four jurors, fifteen were African-Americans, six were whites, and three were Latinos—this in a county that is just eleven per cent black.

Over the many months to come, ten of the jurors were replaced by alternates. The questionnaires answered by the twelve jurors who ultimately decided the case showed that they had these characteristics, according to Vinson's analysis:

All twelve were Democrats.

Only two were college graduates.

Not one juror read a newspaper regularly.

Nine rented their homes; three owned.

Two had supervisory or management responsibilities at work; ten did not.

Eight watched evening television tabloid news, like "Hard Copy." (Vinson's polling data found a predilection for the tabloids to be a reliable predictor of belief in Simpson's innocence.)

Five said that they or a family member had personally had a negative experience with law enforcement.

Five thought that using physical force on a family member was some times justified.

Nine—three-quarters of the jury—thought that O. J. Simpson was unlikely to have committed murder because he excelled at football.

The final group included one African-American man, one Latino man, two white women, and eight African-American women.

On the whole, Marcia Clark was satisfied, especially with the alternates. She and Bill Hodgman didn't even exercise all twenty of their peremptory challenges.

187
BAR
GRILL
BOOTH

"Bert's inner core is spinning on its own."

• •

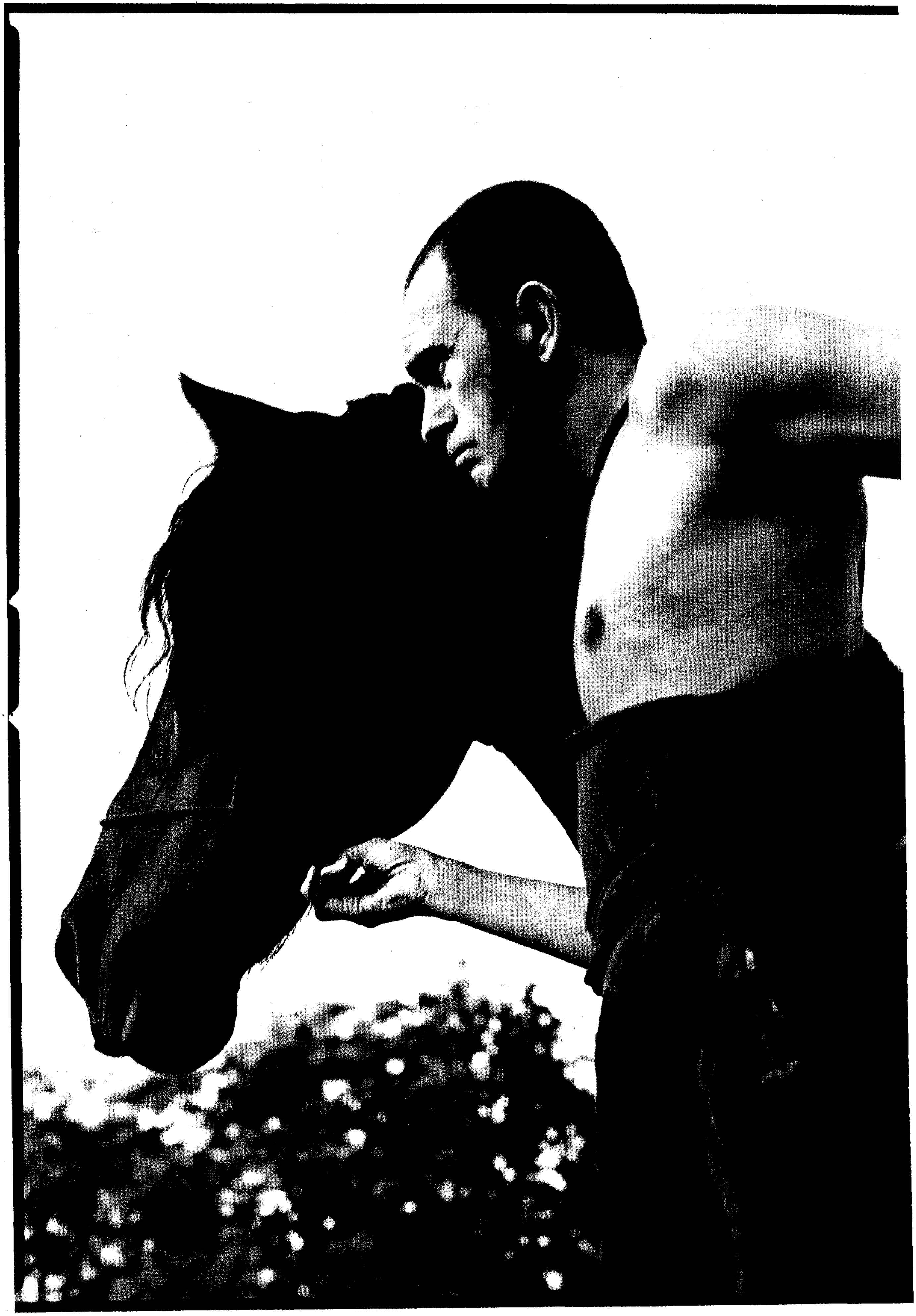
CLARK realized only belatedly how different the Simpson case was from the cases in which she had developed a kinship with black women jurors. She had previously prosecuted the kinds of defendants black women jurors might well have pictured preying on them. O. J. Simpson, in contrast, was an extraordinarily successful black public figure, and his ex-wife was a beautiful young white woman. Nicole was a more likely threat to black women than O. J. While the prosecutors were still speaking to Vinson, he told them there was a "psychosexual" reason for black women's disdain for Clark. He said that African-Americans viewed O. J. Simpson as a symbol of black virility in a predominantly white world. He was handsome, rich, masculine, likable, and charming. As a consequence, according to Vinson, black women, in particular, saw Clark as a "castrating bitch" who was attempting to demean this symbol of black masculinity. To them, everything about Clark seemed harsh—her demeanor, her clothes, and even her rapid-fire speech, which Vinson had felt could intimidate those of lesser educational backgrounds. Vinson and Martel suggested to Garcetti that she might want to soften up her appearance for the trial—a new hair style, fewer business suits, more dresses. Vinson also attempted to broach the subject with Clark, but backed off when she seemed unreceptive.

It is easy to see why Vinson so offended Clark—his pomposity, his jargon-filled analysis, and his personal pointers with the faint whiff of sexism about them. Yet, notwithstanding all that, it is possible to recognize the wisdom of what Vinson had to say, in the light of the apparent near-unanimity of feelings among black women about the Simpson case. If the prosecutors had adopted a different tone, they might have brought the jurors around. If, say, Clark had portrayed Simpson as a troubled man who collapsed under emotional strain—as opposed to a virtual domestic-violence machine—she might have won a more sympathetic hearing. If, likewise, she had acknowledged early on the reality of racism within the Los Angeles Police Department, she might have won points for candor. Instead, she seemed to do precisely what Vinson was warning her not to do.

At the beginning of the trial, this was most evident during the testimony of the L.A.P.D. detective Mark Fuhrman. When he took the stand, several weeks into the trial, his history of racist comments had been public knowledge for many months. Clark still felt—correctly, it turned out—that Fuhrman had had neither the opportunity nor the motive to plant any evidence against Simpson, as the defense contended. And several other police officers who testified about the early-morning hours of June 13, 1994, corroborated key parts of Fuhrman's testimony about discovering a bloody glove at Simpson's estate. To her, that mattered more than any racism that might be found in Fuhrman's background, so she went to extraordinary lengths to embrace Fuhrman in front of the jury. On March 9th, Fuhrman walked into court surrounded by several beefy law-enforcement types, and Clark's examination soon bore out the metaphor implicit in Fuhrman's arrival: she and her office were protecting him.

When Clark stepped to the podium with Fuhrman before her, she cocked her head to one side and asked her first question as if it had just popped into her head.

"Detective Fuhrman, can you tell us



how you feel about testifying today?"

"Nervous," Fuhrman said, not at all nervously.

"O.K.," Clark said, prompting him.

"Reluctant," Fuhrman continued.

"Can you tell us why?" she asked.

"Throughout—since June 13th, it seems that I have seen a lot of the evidence ignored and a lot of personal issues come to the forefront. I think that is too bad."

"O.K.," Clark went on. "Heard a lot about yourself in the press, have you?"

"Daily," Fuhrman said gravely.

Clark asked whether, when he discussed his planned testimony with prosecutors, the questions had concerned the murders and their aftermath.

"No," Fuhrman said.

"It dealt with side issues, sir?"

"Yes, it was . . . It seems that the issues we were concerned with weren't evidentiary in nature or about the crime; mostly of a personal nature."

Clark paused, soaking up the answers from her witness, and then turned to her pad and the beginning of the conventional portion of her direct examination: "Can you tell us how you are employed right now?"

Under Clark's sympathetic questioning, Fuhrman presented himself as an earnest civil servant who tried to do his job in the face of unwarranted and irrelevant personal attacks. His racism was a "side issue." Yet Clark knew that Judge Ito was going to allow Fuhrman to be cross-examined about at least some of his racist remarks—and she also knew that the defense could corroborate the comments. As far as Clark was concerned, Fuhrman might have made some unfortunate remarks in the past, but that didn't mean he tried to frame O. J. Simpson for murder. She assumed that the jurors would see it the same way. They did not.

HOOFING IT

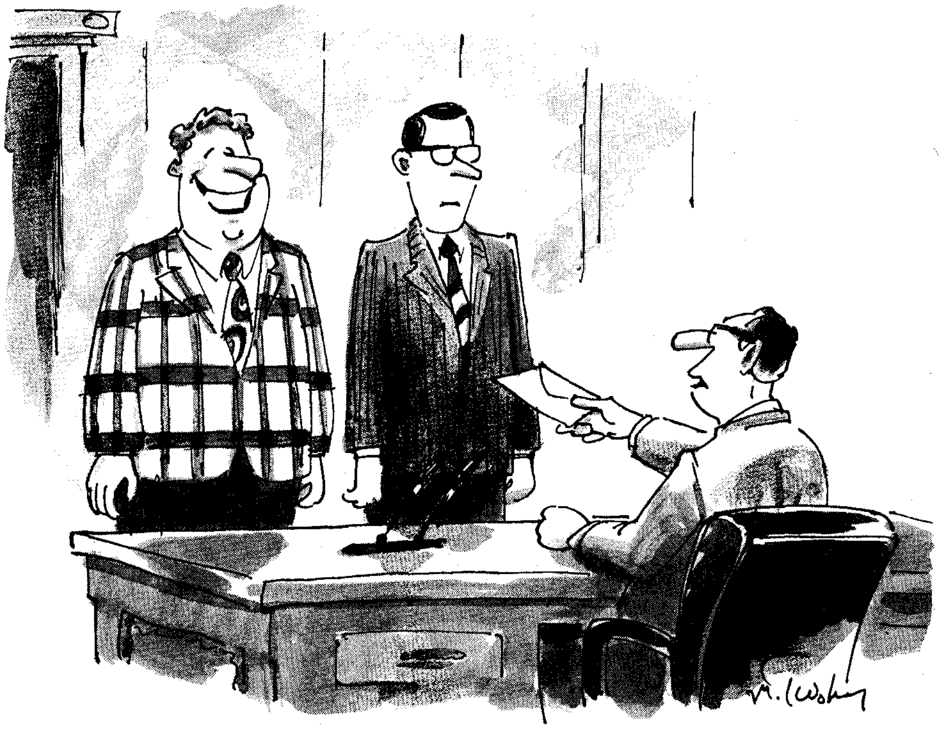
When Zingaro, the French equestrian-theatre troupe, opens under the big top in Battery Park, it will be the début on these shores not only of the company but of an art. In "Chimère" (which runs from September 17th through October 27th), the company's twenty-six horses and twenty-nine dancers, musicians, and acrobats present not circus acts but a moody choreography that owes more to Pina Bausch and Peter Brook than to P. T. Barnum. "The principle of circus is to show technique," Bartabas (left), who founded this hybrid art, and the company, twelve years ago, has said. "The principle for me is to show emotion."

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe

F. LEE BAILEY'S cross-examination of Mark Fuhrman, much of which was devoted to establishing that the detective was a racist, was a paradigmatic moment for the defense. Of course, as a logical matter Fuhrman's racism should have been irrelevant to the case unless the defense could establish that the detective had taken some action in accordance with his repugnant views, but Bailey failed to prove that Fuhrman had taken any such action. Indeed, the idea that Fuhrman tried to frame Simpson was never more than fanciful conjecture. But the defense's endless focus on such issues as whether Fuhrman had uttered the word "nigger" in the previous ten years succeeded in changing the subject of the case—from the evidence against O. J. Simpson to the moral fitness of the police who investigated him.

In response to this audacious defense gambit, Clark at first proceeded as if the race issue did not exist—as she had in her examination of Fuhrman. Then she largely disappeared from the case. The jury began hearing testimony on January 31st, and Clark handled several of the early witnesses, including Fuhrman. But from April through June—a period of three months—she did not examine a single witness. (The prosecution was presenting its DNA evidence then, and Clark had ceded the presentation to other prosecutors.) In this period, Clark further chilled her already frosty relationship with the jurors by being chronically late for court. The sequestered jurors were rousted out of bed early every morning by their uniformed chaperones from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Not surprisingly, they greeted Clark's late arrivals with long, cold stares.

As the case moved into summer, Clark returned to the action. By that time, it seemed apparent that the pros-



"You will laugh all the way to the bank, Degner, but Purvis is to make the actual deposit."

• •

ecution had lost the initiative. The government had presented the findings of its DNA experts in a long-drawn-out and confusing manner, and Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, for the defense, made significant headway in cross-examination. Clark spent much of the time indignantly responding to proddings from the defense, and her frustration mounted. Increasingly, there seemed to be an edge of desperation in her voice.

THE defense began presenting its evidence by calling a number of people who had seen Simpson in the days before the murders: a fellow-guest at a fund-raising dinner on June 11th; an interior designer who had met with him on June 6th; and a man who had played golf with Simpson on June 8th, at a Hertz event in Virginia. All of them testified that Simpson had behaved in a friendly and cordial manner. One can scarcely imagine less provocative (or relevant) testimony. But Clark went after these witnesses as if they were gangsters. She snapped at the golfer, Jack McKay—the timid chief financial officer of the American Psychological Association—asking, "After the two hours you spent with him . . . you don't know what his mood was, do you?"

McKay said he didn't.

"You did not see him on June 9, 1994, correct?"

"Correct."

"The tenth?"

"No."

"The eleventh?"

"No."

"The twelfth?"

"No," the plainly terrified McKay conceded. Perversely, Clark's manner had elevated the importance of a witness she should have dispatched with just a question or two.

The defense turned next to Ellen Aaronson and Danny Mandel, a young couple who had gone out on their first (and only) date—dinner at the Mezzaluna restaurant, in Brentwood—on the night of the murders. Aaronson lived near Nicole's condominium, and after their meal the couple strolled right by the murder scene. The key issue in their testimony was the time they passed Nicole's front door.

It would be difficult to imagine two more reliable witnesses. Aaronson produced videos for children, and Mandel had a job in finance at Sony Pictures. They were educated and articulate; neither had an axe to grind or a lust for publicity; they had behaved responsibly since the night of the murders, calling the police immediately to report what they remembered. The computer receipt of their restaurant bill had been printed at 9:55 P.M. They had chatted for a while after Mandel paid the bill, and they estimated that they had left the restaurant at about ten-fifteen. That would mean that, in Aaronson's words, they passed by Nicole's residence at "a little after ten-twenty-five." In their testimony, both Mandel and Aaronson remembered nothing out of the ordinary as they strolled on Bundy Drive.

For Marcia Clark, this was a problem. In her opening statement, and through the testimony of Pablo Fenjves, one of Nicole's neighbors, Clark had committed herself to the theory that the murders had taken place at approximately ten-fifteen—the time that Fenjves asserted he had heard the "plaintive wail" of a dog. But if the couple on the date saw or heard nothing at ten-twenty-five, what of Clark's theory? That was why the defense wanted Mandel and Aaronson on the stand.

Clark had several options for dealing with their testimony. Fenjves lived behind Nicole's house, while the couple walked in front of it. Clark could have suggested that they simply didn't hear the same sounds. And perhaps they were simply a little off in their time estimates. Or—most likely of all—perhaps Fenjves was slightly mistaken, and the murders did not take place, and Kato the dog did not start barking, until around ten-thirty. Simpson could have still made the five-minute drive to his own house and appeared in front of Allan Park, the limousine driver waiting to take him to the airport, at ten-fifty-five. All in all, Aaronson's and Mandel's testimony was in no sense exculpatory for Simpson. Clark should have had no trouble integrating their version of events into the general prosecution outline of how the murders took place.

But Clark chose instead to attack these witnesses, too.

"I just have to ask you one question," Clark said in beginning her cross-examination of Aaronson. "That credit-card receipt that shows the amount for forty-seven fifty. . . . You guys didn't have anything to drink, right? You just had dinner?"

"No alcohol," Aaronson said—the same thing Mandel had said.

"Right. You just had dinner, just food?"

"Cappuccino afterwards," the witness replied firmly.

"Did that seem like a large amount to pay for just two dinners and a cappuccino?"

Cochran objected to this digression, but Clark kept pursuing Aaronson, pressuring her to account precisely for what they ordered and how "just food and a cappuccino" could have possibly added up to forty-seven dollars. The fact is that if Clark had called Mezzaluna—or any of the other trendy *boites* of Brentwood—she would have learned that it was easy to spend fifty dollars on practically no food at all. She virtually accused Aaronson of conducting a boozy debauch in preparation for the walk home. Clark demanded to know how many people were in the restaurant, exactly the route she and Mandel had walked, everyone she had talked to about the incident, when she first called the police, even what she was wearing.

"And you're not sitting here trying to tell us that there was no body lying at the foot of the steps at 875 South Bundy?" Clark demanded.

Ito asked her to rephrase the question.

"Miss Aaronson," Clark said, "are you telling the jury that there was no one lying at the foot of the steps at 875 South Bundy when you passed by?"

"I have no idea," said Aaronson, who at this point was looking at Clark as if the prosecutor were insane. So were several jurors.

At what was practically Marcia Clark's last moment in front of the jurors, near the end of her rebuttal summation on Friday, September 29th, they offered a final signal of what they thought of her. Her colleague Bill Hodgman had spent several days before the summations working on an elaborate chart entitled "Unrefuted Evidence." It was arranged in the form of a big pyramid, and Clark saved it for the conclusion of her remarks to the jury. It was a complicated graphic, and Clark did not discuss every point on it, so she made the jurors an offer.

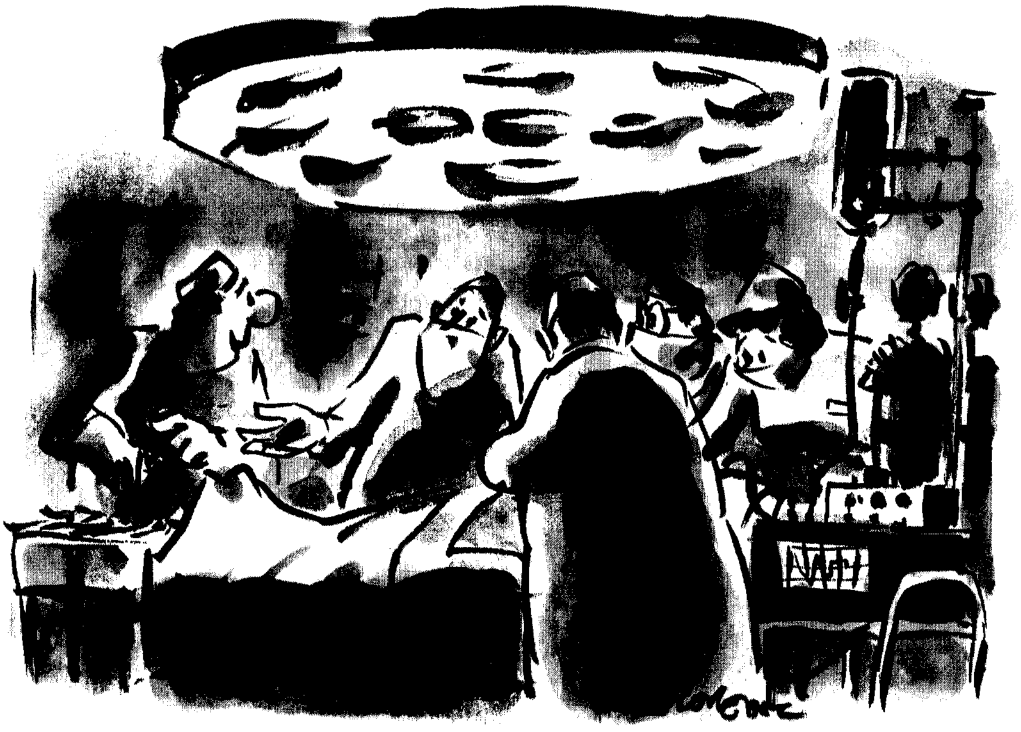
"If you would like to take notes on this, I can leave it up for a little while," Clark said.

Not one juror wrote down a thing.

On October 3rd, the jury acquitted Simpson after weighing the evidence for only a few hours. The brevity of the deliberations offered almost as great a rebuke to Marcia Clark and the other prosecutors as the verdict itself. Such perfunctory consideration of eight months of witnesses bespoke more than mere disagreement with the prosecution; it showed contempt.

American jurors have a long and still flourishing tradition both of taking race into account and of denying that they are doing any such thing. The ten whites, one Asian, and one Latino in Simi Valley who in 1992 acquitted the L.A.P.D. officers in the Rodney King case denied that race had been a factor in their decisions; so did the ten blacks and two whites who in 1990 acquitted Mayor Marion Barry, of Washington, on all but one of the fourteen charges against him. But these cases also had subtexts to which the jurors could not fail to respond. In the King case, the jurors empathized with police officers forced to patrol in a dangerous and hostile environment; in the Barry case, the jurors understood that the law-enforcement establishment had pursued the Mayor for years, until he was captured on videotape smoking crack cocaine. The defense, in those cases, succeeded in making the subtexts trump the compelling evidence of the defendants' guilt. So, too, did O. J. Simpson's lawyers. In an act of startling bravado, they sought to portray their client as just another black Angeleno caught up in the hostile embrace of the L.A.P.D. The lawyers executed this strategy even in the face of thin to nonexistent evidence to support it.

Marcia Clark had her own narrative of the murder for the jury—one that featured a remorseless, relentless defendant moving inexorably from domestic violence to homicide. Clark's theory was that black women would respond to this story. She also clung to an old-fashioned idea of jury service—one based on the assumption that people of diverse backgrounds could unite to focus exclusively on the serious issues before them. She believed that, in the end, the overwhelming nature of the evidence against Simpson would matter more than anything else. Clark paid the price for her idealism in a case where the cynics—about the jury system, about human nature, and about O. J. Simpson—were proved right. ♦



"*Which one is the scalpel? I'm here on workfare.*"

TALES

ON THE STREET

Confessions in the company of strangers.

BY VIVIAN GORNICK

A WRITER who lived at the end of my block died. I'd known this woman more than twenty years. She admired my work, shared my politics, liked my face when she saw it coming toward her—I could see that—but she didn't want to spend time with me. We'd run into each other on the street, and it was always big smiles, a wide embrace, kisses on both cheeks, a few minutes of happy unguarded jabber. Inevitably, I'd say, "Let's get together." She'd nod and say, "Call me." I'd call, and she'd make an excuse to call back, then she never would. Next time we ran into each other: big smile, great hug, kisses on both cheeks, not a word about the unreturned call. She was impenetrable: I could not pierce the mask of smiling politeness. We went on like this for years. Sometimes I'd run into her in other parts of town. I'd always be startled, and she would, too: New York is like a country, the neighborhood is your town, you spot someone from the block or the building in another neighborhood and the first impulse to the brain is, What are *you* doing here? Each of us would see the thought on the other's face and start to laugh. Then we'd both give a brief salute and keep walking.

One day six months after her death, I passed her house and felt stricken. I realized that never again would I look at her retreating back thinking, Why doesn't she want my friendship? I missed her then. I missed her terribly. She was gone from the landscape of marginal encounters. That landscape against which I measure daily the immutable force of all I connect with only on the street, and only when it sees me coming.

ON Thirty-eighth Street, two men were leaning against a building one afternoon in July. They were both bald, both had cigars in their mouths, and each one had a small dog attached to a leash. In the glare of noise, heat, dust, and confusion, the dogs barked non-stop. Both men looked balefully at their animals. "Yap, yap, stop yapping already," one man said angrily. "Yap, yap, keep on yapping," the other said softly. I burst out laughing. The men looked up at me and grinned. Satisfaction spread itself across their faces. They had performed, and I had received. My laughter had given shape to an exchange that would otherwise have evaporated in the chaos. The glare felt less threatening. I realized how often the street achieves composition for me: the flash of experience I extract again and again from the endless stream of events. The street does for me what I cannot do for myself. On the street nobody watches; everyone performs.

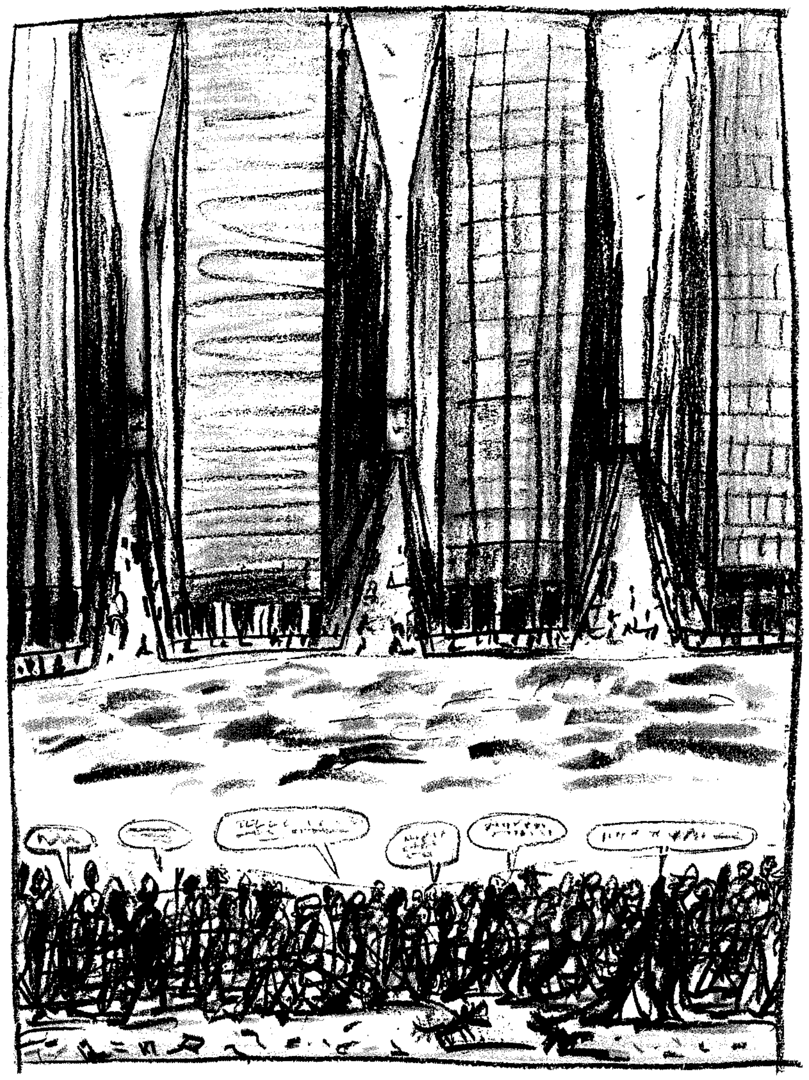
Another summer afternoon, I stood at my kitchen sink struggling to make a faulty spray attachment adhere to the inside of the faucet. Finally, I called the super. He shook his head. The washer inside the sprayer was too small for the faucet. Maybe the threads had worn down. I should go to the hardware store and find a washer big enough to remedy the situation. I walked down Greenwich Avenue, carrying the faucet and the attachment, trying hard to remember exactly what the super had told me to ask for. Suddenly I felt terribly anxious. I would not, I knew, be able to get what I needed. The sprayer would never work again. I walked into Garber's, an old-fashioned hardware store with tough old Jewish guys behind the counter. One of them—also bald and with a cigar in his mouth—took the faucet and the sprayer in his hand. He looked at them. Slowly, he began to shake his head. Obviously, there was no hope. "Lady," he said. "It ain't the threads. It definitely ain't the threads." He continued to shake his head. He wanted there to be no hope as long as possible. "And this," he said, holding the gray plastic washer in his open hand, "this is a piece a crap." I stood there in patient despair. He shifted his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other, then moved away from the counter. I saw him rooting about in a drawerful of little cardboard boxes. He removed something from one of them and returned to the counter with the sprayer magically attached to the faucet. He detached it and showed me what he had done. Where there had once been gray plastic there was now gleaming silver. He screwed the sprayer back on, easy as you please. "Oh," I crowed, "you've done it!" Torn between the triumph of problem-solving and the satisfaction of denial, his mouth twisted up in a grim smile. "Metal," he said philosophically, tapping the perfectly fitted washer in the faucet. "This"—he picked up the plastic again—"this is a piece a crap. I'll take two dollars and fifteen cents from you." I thanked him profusely, gave him the money, then clasped my hands together on the counter and said, "It is such a pleasure to have small anxieties easily corrected." He looked at me. "Now," I said, spreading my arms wide, palms up, as though about to introduce a vaudeville act, "you've freed me for large anxieties."

He continued to look at me. Then he shifted his cigar again, and spoke: "What you just said. That's a true thing." I walked out of the store happy. That evening I told the story to Laura, a writer. She said, "These are your people." Later in the evening I told it to Leonard, a New Yorker. He said, "He charged you too much."

Street theatre can be achieved in a store, on a bus, in your apartment. The idiom requires enough actors (bit players as well as principals) to complete the action and the rhythm of extended exchange. The city is rich in both.

SOMETIMES—when I am feeling expansive—my life seems to mirror an urban essence I prize: the dense and original quality of life on the margin, the risk and excitement of having to put it all together anew each day. The harshness of the city seems alluring. Ah, the pleasures of conflict! The glamour of uncertainty!

Hurrah for neurotic friendships and yea to incivility!



EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

At other times I stare out the window, thinking, What a fool you are to glamorize life in the city. Loneliness engulfs me like dry heat. It is New York loneliness, hot with shame, a loneliness that tells you you're a fool and a loser. Everyone else is feasting, you alone cannot gain a seat at the banquet. I look down at the street. I see that mine is a workhorse life. As long as I remain in harness I am able to put one foot in front of the other without losing step, but if anything unbalances me I feel again the weight of circumstance hanging from my neck, a millstone beneath which I have taught myself to walk upright.

The day is brilliant: asphalt glimmers, people knife through the crowd, buildings look cut out against a rare blue sky. The sidewalk is mobbed, the sound of traffic deafening. I walk slowly, and people hit against me. Within a mile my pace quickens, my eyes relax, my ears clear out. Here and there a face, a body, a gesture separates itself from the endlessly advancing crowd, attracts my reviving attention. I begin to hear the city, and feel its presence. Two men in their twenties, thin and well dressed, brush past me, one saying rapidly to the other, "You gotta give her credit. She made herself out of nothing. And I mean nothing." I laugh and lose my rhythm. Excuse me, my fault, beg your pardon. . . . A couple appears in the crowd, dark, attractive, middle-aged. As they come abreast of me the man is saying to the woman, "It's always my problem. It's never your problem." Cars honk, trucks screech, lights change. Sidewalk venders hawk food, clothing, jewelry. A man standing beside a folding table covered with gold and silver watches speaks quietly into the air. "It's a steal, ladies and gentlemen," he says. "A real steal." Another couple is coming toward me, this time an odd one. The woman is black, a dwarf, around forty years old. The boy is Hispanic, twelve or fourteen. She looks straight ahead as she walks, he dances along beside her. As they pass, she says, in the voice of a Montessori mother, "It doesn't matter what he thinks. It only matters what you think."

My shoulders straighten, my stride lengthens. The misery in my chest begins to dissolve. The city is opening itself to me. I feel myself enfolded in the embrace of the crowded street, its heedless expressiveness the only invitation I need not to feel shut out.

THERE are mornings when I awake and, somehow, have more of myself. I draw up the blind and, from my sixteenth-floor window, feel the city spilling itself across my eyes, crowding into the world, filling in the landscape. Behind it, in the distance, is the Hudson River and, if I want it, the sky. But I don't want it. What I want is to take this self I now have more of down into those noisy, dirty, dangerous streets and make my way from one end of Manhattan to the other. There is no friend, lover, or relative I want to be with as much as I want to be jostled and bumped, catching the eye of the stranger, feeling the stranger's touch. In the street I am grinning like an idiot to myself, walking fast at everyone coming my way. Children stare, men smile, women laugh right into my eyes. The tenderness I encounter in that mood! The impersonal affection of a palm laid against my arm or my back as someone murmurs, "Excuse me," and sidles skillfully past my body: it soothes beyond reasonable explanation. I feel such love then, for the idea of the city as well as the reality. And everyone looks good: handsome, stylish, interesting. Life spills over without stint and without condition. I feel often that I am walking with my head tipped back, my mouth thrown open, a stream of sunlight on water pouring into my throat. When I consider the days on which I find myself looking into one gargoyle face after another—everyone in front of me old, ugly, deformed, and diseased—I realize that the street gives me back a primitive reflection of whatever load of hope or fear I am carrying about with me that day.

Nothing heals me of a sore and angry heart like a walk through the very city I often feel denying me. To see in the street the fifty different ways people struggle to remain human until the very last minute—the variety and inventiveness of survival technique—is to feel the pressure relieved, the overflow draining off. I join the anxiety. I share the condition. I feel in my nerve endings the common refusal to go under. Never am I less alone than alone in the crowded street.

THIS morning, on Eighth Avenue in Chelsea, I saw a woman I thought I knew, a faculty wife I'd once met somewhere in the South. The woman's face was narrow and fine-boned, framed in a waterfall of New York kinky hair. She was wearing worn leather boots that had once been expensive, along with a wool cape three years out of fashion and held together by a jade-and-silver clasp—just the kind of thing this faculty wife might have worn. When I got close, I saw that it was not the same woman at all. How knowing this face was! It was the face of a woman who had had expectations. The mouth was ravaged, the chin defiant, the lipstick bold, the eyes resigned to intelligent obscurity. The woman looked glamorous to me here on Eighth Avenue at ten in the morning—richly haggard, a jewel in its natural setting—with the street at her back and all that she knew etched clearly in her face. It was a face that could have been made only in the city.

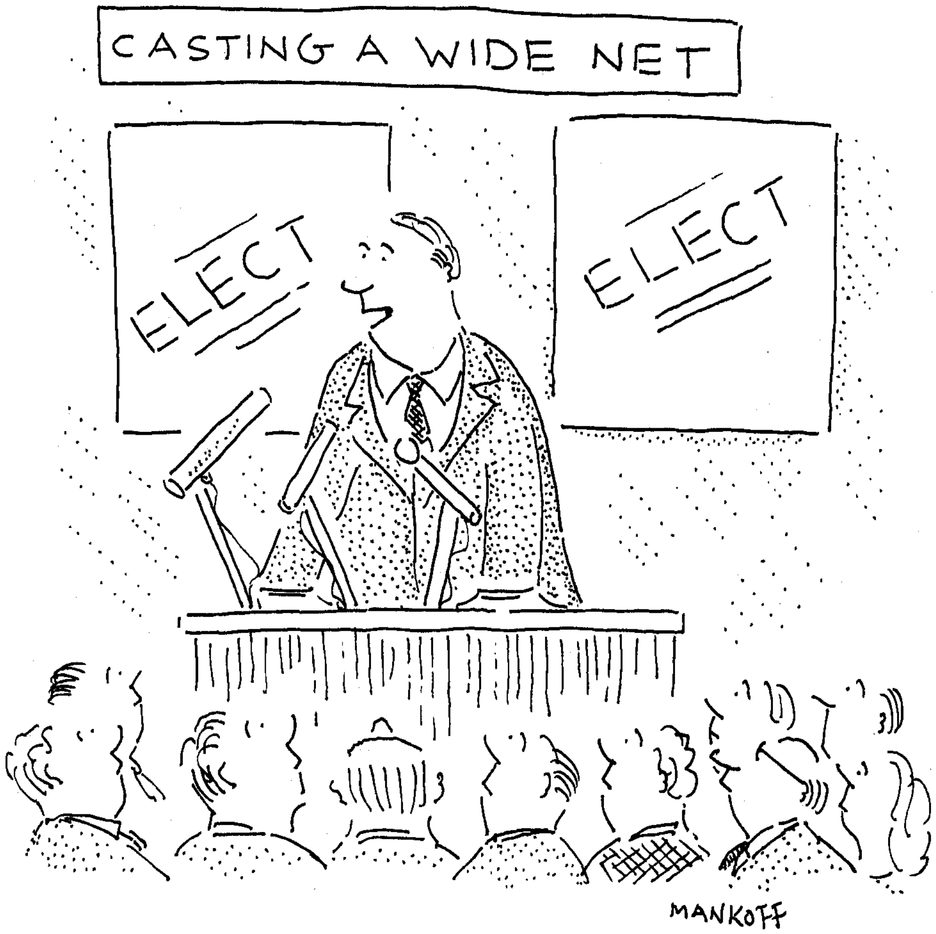
In the South the woman I knew had seemed odd, an embarrassing exotic. It was the isolation that had done her in, I could see that now. She could survive in the South but not flourish. On the way to interesting, she had stopped at eccentric. To blossom just anywhere, one must be either distinguished enough to create one's own environment or humble enough to merge with the one at hand. If one is neither, a critical mass of like-minded spirits is required. It's like the difference between ordinary plants put down in a suburban flower bed and those in a richly planted garden whose massed profusion makes the same homely bushes and flowers glow with "element." Here on Eighth Avenue what this woman knew made her exciting. Put her down in a Southern college town and she'd quickly become forlorn.

ON Ninth Avenue, near the bus station, there is a couple walking beside me, in the gutter, among the cars. They are both black, both thin, and both dressed in rags. The man carries a heavy shopping bag in each hand. The woman walks behind him, carrying nothing, trembling with fatigue. The man seems beyond speech. He moves stoically ahead. She moves slowly, with great hesitation. Her face weeps without a sound. She cries out at him, "You no good! You no good at all. You take everything from me. Everything!" The man makes no reply. The woman repeats that he is no good and that he has taken everything from her. "You one no-good man," she calls out again. "I gonna call the poh-leece on you. You heah me? I gonna call the poh-leece." To my astonishment, she does indeed stop a cop and demand that he attend to her complaint. A crowd begins to gather. The cop hears the woman out. The man with the shopping bags stops walking. I see the effort it costs him to bring his plodding motion to a halt. The cop turns to him. The man says quietly that he has taken nothing from her, that he is carrying her load as well as his own. The cop nods wearily. He and the man quickly become allies. The cop puts a hand on his arm and one on the woman's arm. He urges them to repair their quarrel and sends them on their way. The woman stands there helpless, all hope now gone. The man waits, looking patiently at her. He knows he must let her speak. The woman extends her arm, makes a fist of her hand. From the fist she extends her forefinger and shakes it like a thermometer at the man. "I don' want no part of you," she cries out. "You stay away from me! I don' wan' no part of you no more." Slowly, the other fingers of her clenched fist open out. These fingers then begin to curl inward. They open and close in a beckoning motion. "I don' wan' no part of you," she cries. The fingers begin to implore instead of accuse. Swifter and swifter, they beckon. And all the while she keeps on crying, "I don' wan' no part of you."

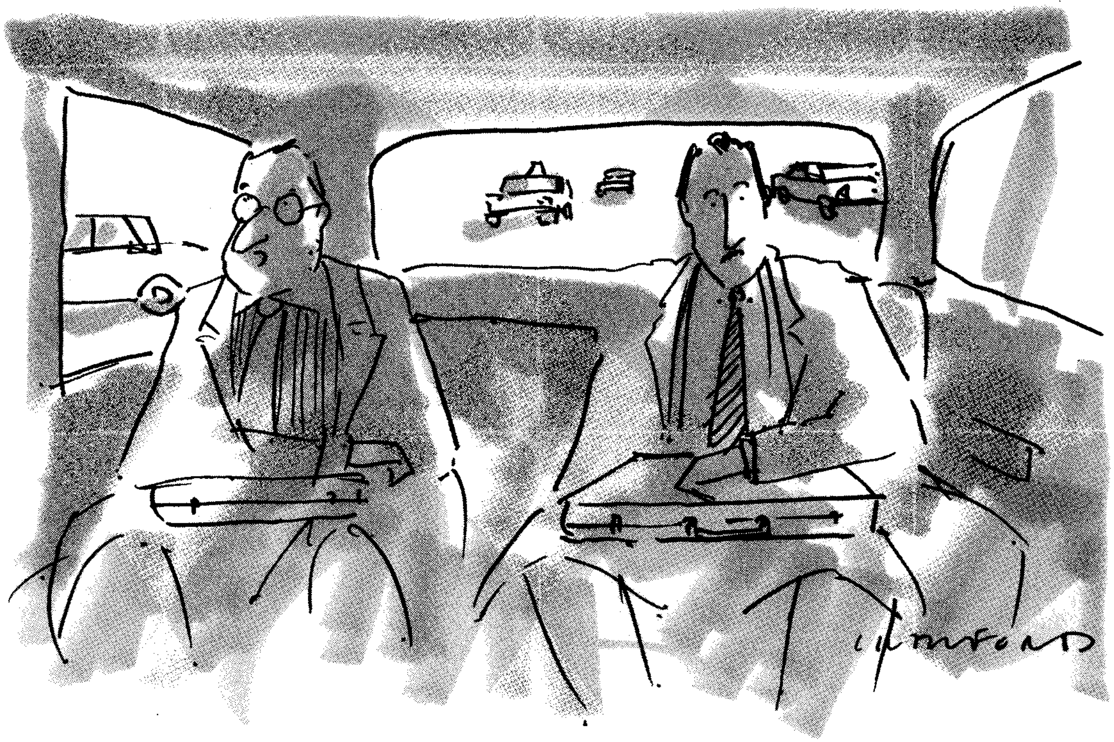
I stand at the edge of the crowd. The woman's voice and gesture thrill me. I am amazed by her eloquence: how well she has put language and movement together to tell her story.

When I was growing up, New York was safe, everything was either cheap or free, and, in midtown, no gays, no blacks, no women. Now the city is violent, everything costs the earth, and we are all visible.

IN the middle of the intersection at Thirty-fourth and Second, two cars have nearly collided. Both are stopped at angles of craziness, doors flung open, each driver out of his car screaming. Instantly, a crowd gathers. A cop walks over. Both drivers scream at him, "Man,



"Fellow-earthlings . . ."



"I can't play squash tonight, Ed. I promised Linda I'd put in a little Kama Sutra time with her before the opera."

• •

you see what he did? You see what he *did*?" The cop places a hand on the arm of each man and says, "I'm now about to administer justice. You"—he nods at one and points east—"get in your car. You"—he nods at the other and points west—"get in *your* car. And both of you, get the fuck out of here." The crowd applauds.

The street keeps moving. You've got to lift the story from the motion, understand and not regret that all is dependent on the swiftness with which we come into view and pass out of it again. The pleasure and the reassurance lie precisely in the speed with which connection is established and then let go of. No need to clutch. The connection is generic, not specific. There's another piece of it coming right along behind this one.

On the Sixth Avenue bus I get up to give an old woman my seat. She's small and blond, wearing gold jewelry and a mink coat, her hands a pair of blotchy claws with long red fingernails. "You did a good thing, dear," she says to me, smiling coyly. "I'm ninety years old. I was ninety yesterday." I smile back at her. "You look fantastic," I say. "Not a day over seventy-five." Her eyes flash. "Don't get smart," she says curtly.

At Forty-eighth Street, as I'm walking downtown a couple catches my eye. His face is ghastly white, hers a mask of badly applied makeup. Their eyes are swollen slits inside pouches of alcoholic skin. Both are wearing tight cheap clothes, her hips bursting from her skirt, his belly pushing up beneath his T-shirt. With a cigarette in her mouth she bends to take a light from the match in his trembling hand. As I pass them she straightens up, exhales her first breath of smoke, and says, "You are starting with a negative attitude. That is not the way to do it."

The streets attest to the power of narrative drive: its infinite capacity for adaptation in the most inhospitable of times. Civilization is breaking up? The city is deranged? The century is surreal? Move faster. Find the story line more quickly.

I cut over to Broadway and continue on downtown. As I'm crossing Forty-second Street in a mob of people, the man in front of me—skinny, black, young—suddenly lies down, spread-eagled, in the middle of the street just as the cars are beginning to move. I turn wildly to the man walking beside me, who, as it happens, is also skinny, young, and black, and say to him, "Why is he *doing* this?" Without breaking his stride he shrugs at me: "I don't know, lady. Maybe he's depressed."

LEONARD and I are passing a bakery window on the Upper East Side. Behind the shining plate glass stands a dishful of madeleines.

"I've never had one," I say. "What are they like?"

"Nice," he replies. "Spongy," he adds. "Nothing to write seven novels about," he concludes.

"The other day, I was accused of being judgmental," I tell him. "What a laugh, I thought, you should have known me ten years ago. But, you know, I am *tired* of apologizing for being judgmental. Why *shouldn't* I be judgmental? I *like* being judgmental. Judgment is reassuring. Absolutes. Certainties. I want them back again. Everyone used to seem grown-up. Nobody does anymore. Look at us. Forty years ago, we would have been our parents. Who are we now?"

"They passed," Leonard says. "That's all. Forty years ago, you entered a closet called marriage. In the closet was a double set of clothes, so stiff they could stand up by themselves. A woman stepped into the dress called 'wife' and a man stepped into the suit called 'husband.' And that was it. They disappeared inside the clothes." He strikes a match and holds it to his cigarette. "Today we don't pass. We're standing here naked. That's all."

In the evening we have dinner at the home of a pair of lawyers we both know only slightly. The people at the table are homophobic, worshipful of "values," and avid to talk culture. The dinner is expensive, but the conversation is junk food. The lawyers address themselves exclusively to me. I feel trapped. Repeatedly, I turn to Leonard to enjoy myself, but I am alone at the table. He has withdrawn. Later, we walk through the dark and silent streets. The night is cold. We burrow into ourselves. After a time, Leonard says to me, "I don't interest them. And the part of me that's interesting frightens them."

We do not draw closer because of

what he has just said—I've been alone in his presence too many hours now—but life feels easier to bear for the clarity his words have imposed on an otherwise meaningless evening.

IT'S the hottest July on record, and I'm walking down Madison Avenue at two in the afternoon. Somewhere in the Forties, I decide to get a frozen-yogurt cone. As I walk out of the store the yogurt begins to melt. I stand there, licking as fast as I can. People start moving around me. I lick faster, but I'm not making any headway. The stuff is dripping down my hand onto the sidewalk. "Whatsamatta?" a man's voice says in my left ear. "Don't you know how to eat an ice-cream cone?" I turn, laughing, toward my interlocutor. He's small, dark, bearded, he has a manila envelope in his hand and a big grin that dies on his mouth when he sees my face. "Ya not Susan Goldberg!" he cries, as though I'd deceived him. "I thought you was Susan Goldberg." His voice is half accusing, half apologetic. "Ya look just like Susan Goldberg. I mean, the eyes, the hair, the whole thing." I've got one eye on him, one on the melting yogurt. I'm still licking as fast as I can. I see the hair is matted, the beard scraggly, the eyes destroyed. He goes on, "I wouldna talked ta ya if I'd known you wasn't Susan Goldberg, but I mean Susan Goldberg, she's a woman you don' wanna pass up, you know what I mean? You pass up Susan Goldberg she takes it personally. She thinks you don' like her. I got myself in a lotta trouble passing her up, but, believe me, if I'd known you wasn't Susan Goldberg I wouldna talked ta ya.

"That Susan Goldberg!" His laugh is crazy now. "She's really something." He shivers in the heat. "She reminds me of my mother."

The grin returns to his mouth as suddenly as it left. "Anyway, you're a lot nicer than Susan Goldberg. Enjoy your ice-cream cone!" He waves the manila envelope at me and dives into a building entrance a few doors away. I want to call after him, "It's not ice cream," but since I haven't spoken a word it seems inappropriate to break my silence now.

I'm still standing there, paralyzed by the dripping cone. In less than a minute, the small dark man pops out of the building again, the manila envelope still in his hand: wrong address. He calls out, "Lady, enjoy ya-self!" grinning madly at me. "That's right, lady. Enjoy ya-self. Who knows how long we got, ya know what I mean?" I do not respond. But response is not required. All that is required is that I remain in place. He backtracks until he's standing beside me.

"You remind me of my mother," he says. "I love that woman. God, do I love that woman. I can't go see her, she lives in a bad neighborhood, ya know what I mean? I mean drugs an' all, it's no good for me, ya know what I mean? I'm so messed up right now, I mean I got all this pressure in my head, ya know what I mean, the drugs are no good, I mean I already lost two kids of my own by two women. I can't go see my mother, but I love that woman, I love her, I sent her an engagement ring, it ain't that I wanna make it with my mother, that's not what I mean, it ain't that, I sent her the ring ta let her know I got the *feelings*, ah, but it's no good for me, I can't go see her—the

THE BROTHER THIEF

Four men rob the bronze
Buddha at Veheragale
and disappear from their families

The statue carried
along jungle pathways
its right arm raised
to the jerking sky
in the gesture of
"protection" "reassurance"

toward clouds and birdcall
to this quick terror
in the four men
moving under him

The Buddha with them
all night by a small
thorn fire, touching
the robe at his shoulder
ahvana mudra—"gesture
of calling for a discourse"

Three of the men asleep.
The youngest feeds the fire
beside the bronze
its dark-gemmed eyes,

allows himself honey
as night progresses
as sounds quieten and thicken

the shift during night hours
to lesser, more various animals.
Creatures like us, he thinks.

Beyond this pupil of heat
all geography is burned.

No mountain or star
no river noise,
nothing
to give him course.

His world is
a honey pot
a statue on its side
the gaze restless
from firelight

He climbs
behind the bronze
slides his arm around
with the knife
and cuts the eyes

chipped gems
fall into his hands

then startles
wakes innocent
out of his nightmare

rubs his own eyes

He stands and
breathes night

air deep
into himself

swallows all
he can of

thorn-smoke
nine small sounds
a distant coolness

Dark peace,
like a cave of water

—MICHAEL ONDAATJE

neighborhood messes me up, an' I got all this pressure in my head."

By now I'm covered with dried drippings. I'm as trapped by the indignity I've inflicted on myself as the man before me is by the pressure in his head. "Gee," he now says to me, "ya like a psychiatrist, ya know what I mean?"

"No," I say, driven at last to speak. "I don't know what you mean."

"Well," he says, "ya hangin' in there with me, listenin' ta me, talkin' ta me." He giggles. "Just like one of them doctors on TV."

"I'm not doing anything!" I cry out. "You're doing it all yourself."

His head lolls idiotically on his shoulder. "Nah," he says, and explains patiently, "Ya lettin' me talk. That's like talkin' ta me."

ON Forty-second Street, two women and three children stand motionless beside a hot-dog counter. The children, two boys and a girl, are looking gloomy, the women distressed. One woman is angry, the other miserable. The angry one says, "*Why* I say that? I say that because they *in*grates! *That's* why I say that." The unhappy one does not reply. As I pass them the oldest boy, holding a soda can in his hand, begins dancing around the others. "You just a bunch of li'l ingrates," he chants softly into the girl's ear, using the straw in his can to jab at her.

At Forty-ninth Street, I board the crosstown bus. Every seat is taken. At the back, I come to a halt in front of a woman who, along with her packages, occupies two seats. She wears a black dress, black high-heeled shoes, and a black picture hat. The lines in her face are made deep by heavy makeup, her eyeshadow is smeared, and lipstick has seeped into the creases around her mouth. The packages are three Lord & Taylor shopping bags. Beside me stands a woman about the age of the woman in the picture hat. She is stocky, her hair is gray and cropped like Gertrude Stein's, the eyes behind steel-rimmed glasses are blue, placid, intelligent. She looks thoughtfully at the packages and leans forward. "Would you mind removing your things from the seat?" she asks in a kindly voice. "I'd like to sit down." The woman in the hat nods slowly. She seems to be gathering herself together to remove the bags, but two blocks later they're still on the seat. She receives an inquiring look. "You're rushing me!" she says loudly. "I won't tolerate it." Gertrude Stein leans back on her low brown heels, taking the measure of the woman in the hat. "We ain't none of us getting any younger, lady," she says, her voice dangerously soft. "Move the fucking packages."

Later in the day, I walk to the corner for cash. As I approach the bank, I see a man up against the building, face to the wall, surrounded by uniformed police. I make my way around the cops, plastic card in hand, and push inside. The line is short. Everyone in it stares languidly out at the street. In front of the money machine, a woman punches furiously at the keys on the flat plastic surface.

"They must have nothing to do," a schoolgirl in front of me says. "Fifteen cops and just this one guy."

"Right," the man in front of her says. "You know how much this little scene is costing the city?"

The girl shrugs. "Maybe he's bionic man," she says.

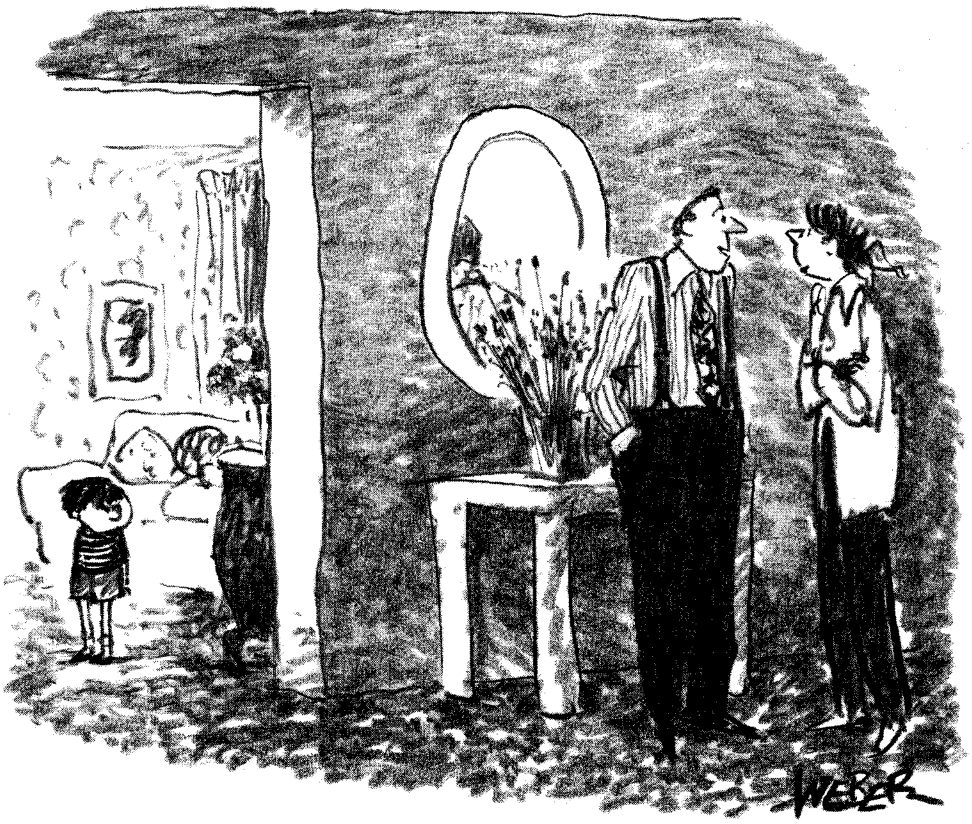
Outside, two policemen jerk the rebellious captive up against the window.

The door flies open. An anorexic man stands in the doorway, card in hand, alarm in his eyes. "He didn't rob *this* place, did he?"

"No," we all chorus. "Come on in. Money for everyone."

I HAVE dinner at my table looking out at the city. As the sky darkens and the lights go on in the buildings all around, I see, in the air between me and the crowded horizon, the people of the day. I begin revising the scenes, adding dialogue here, analysis there, commentary further on. Then I find myself backing up, imagining each person before we met up. With a start, I realize I am writing the story of the day, lending shape and texture to the hours just behind me. They're in the room with me now, these people I brushed against today. I'd rather be here with them tonight than with anyone I know. They return the narrative impulse to me. Let me make sense of things. Remind me to tell the story I cannot make my life tell.

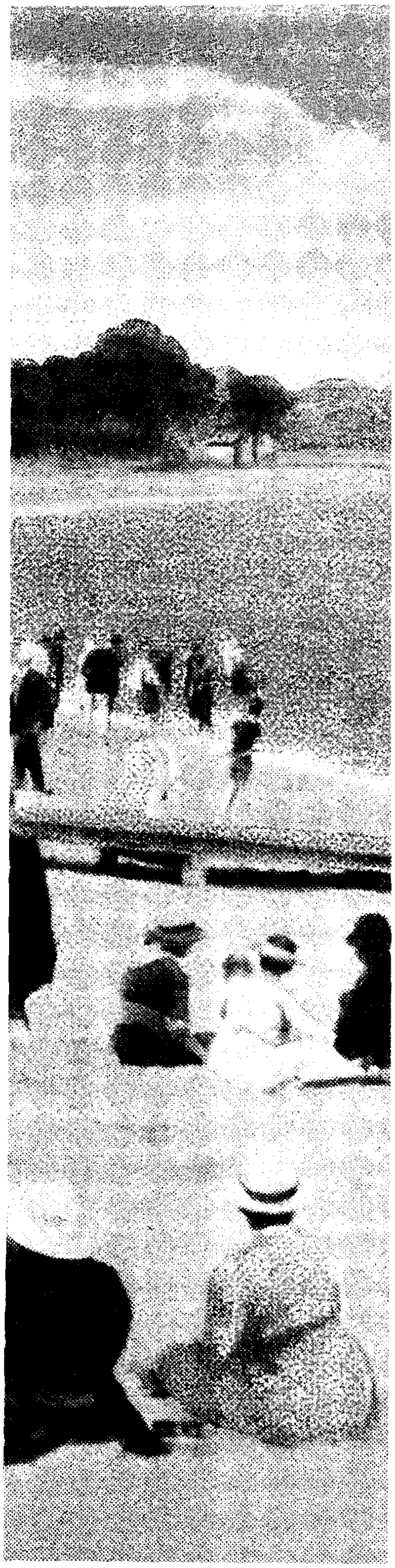
I need them. I need the boy with the soda can, Gertrude Stein on the bus, bionic man at the bank. I need them more than I need clean air, safe streets, or low taxes. I need them, and I have them. If everyone I know died tomorrow, I'd still have them. I'd have the city. ♦



"I've had a long talk with Jonah, and I think he's willing to work with us."

LAKE COUNTY MUSEUM (IL), CURT TEICH POSTCARD ARCHIVES

Bathers at Westport's Compo Beach. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald (opposite) summered down the road, revelling in a place full



le with a need to create something new.

LIFE AND LETTERS

WESTPORT WILDLIFE

In 1920, the waterfront town of Westport, Connecticut, was everything that Manhattan was about to become. F. Scott Fitzgerald was there, and so, maybe, was Jay Gatsby.

BY BARBARA PROBST SOLOMON

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IF you go past the train station for Westport, Connecticut, which is in the part of town called Saugatuck, and drive west along the shore road, just before you reach the Norwalk town line you come to the tidal-basin land that the Norwalk and Compaw Indians long ago called Great Salt Marsh. The mouth of the Saugatuck River empties into Long Island Sound there, forming a bay. In 1920, F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose hundredth birthday is this fall, and his wife, Zelda, rented a summer cottage on the east side of the bay, in the direction of Compo Beach. On the west side, toward Norwalk, was Great Marsh, my parents' place. I spent many summers there, and so did my daughters, Carla and Maria, until my husband died, in 1967—the same year my parents sold Great Marsh. Though the two events were not connected, they froze in my mind as the end of a summer happiness that vanished while I was in my thirties: in my life thereafter, time existed as pre-1967 and post-1967. I never went back.

Then, two summers ago, I rented a beach house in Bell Island, just south of Westport. Maria, her year-old son, Aaron, and Carla's seven-year-old daughter, Katharine, were visiting me, and Maria made the obvious suggestion: "We've come this far—let's go to Great Marsh." I hesitated; she insisted. I knew we were making a journey home, into my own past and that of my parents; what I didn't know was that it would lead me to an odyssey of literary discovery about the Westport of bootleggers and summer places inhabited by the Fitzgeralds, whom my parents never knew.

The drive took us fifteen minutes. I turned the wheel automatically in the right direction; suddenly, we were there. The old iron gates were in place, but the massive brass "Great Marsh" plaque had

UP
DOWN
OTHER OPTIONS

• •

been ripped off the left gate, where it had hung when I was a girl; the sprawl of trees and the hundred acres of rose gardens, gazebos, and French lilac bushes that had once sloped down to the Sound—the estate was landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted, my parents always said—had given way to clusters of manicured houses. Maria was determined to find the original big house in the maze, and we finally did. A conglomerate was in the midst of making plans to sell it as Westport's finest example of a Queen Anne estate. We learned this from a renovation specialist and an architect who were standing in the driveway when we pulled up. At first, they just stared at Maria and me, and at Aaron and Katharine, who were both barefoot; they seemed stunned that the house's former occupants had conveniently materialized. Well, I thought, as I answered a rush of questions from the renovation specialist, who took us inside, sometimes history does surprise you, and rolls up unannounced in an Avis rent-a-car covered with late-August dust.

The historic veneer that the conglomerate had planned for the house was a mélange of Connecticut Victoriana updated with wet bars, and the architect had instructed his workmen to scrape the walls down to their original paint. But no recovered chip of pale aqua could return to pristine authenticity a house that billowed out in every direction, whose successive owners had blithely added this and that to suit their fancy. When we lived there, we had three kitchens and two pantries, and my bedroom was absurdly large and had nine windows, yet the main entrance hall and its staircase were tiny and cramped. In my imagination I refurnished the empty shell that had once been a living room and study. I closed my eyes and saw again the oversized sofas, the floor-to-ceiling built-in bookcases, the faded Oriental rugs smelling of salt air, and the careless bowls of flowers of my childhood.

We went outside and looked out over the Sound. Our long pier was still standing, and I watched Maria bolt to the end of it. Westport—the Westport my parents knew—symbolized the opposite of the retro-Victorian world that the architects wanted to restore to Great Marsh. The artists who originally came to Westport were, like Fitzgerald, born close enough in time to the Victorian era that it didn't occur to them to sentimentalize it. Indeed, the town barely existed in the nineteenth century, other than as a farm center. Its unique history started in the twentieth, when it became the watering hole of a set of energetic, talented people, who flocked there because it was rural, beautiful, cheap, and near the city. They were interested in modernism and change; the gentrification of Victorian homes had little meaning to them. A column written in 1928 by Jairus and Jabez for the Bridgeport *Herald* said of Westport, "The town itself is negligible. The center bursts on the retina and is gone, if one's car is fast. . . . Glimpses are caught of a few crumbling mansions, several garages, a row or two of ramshackle business places, and the long flat bridge spanning the Saugatuck river." It was not quite the quaint Connecticut town of our imagination—a hobo population camped by the river.

I walked down to the end of the pier and stood at the top of the gangplank, remembering how as a teen-ager I used to sit on the float below, dangling my feet in the water and wondering if Fitzgerald, from the beach below his cottage, on the Compo side of the bay, could have seen our pier, which was said to be the longest private pier in the vicinity, and the stretch of big shore estates on our side.

His presence in Westport was mythic. When my older brother, Mark, wrote to me at the end of the Second World War, while he was in the Air Force and I was in high school, he instructed me to buy "The Crack-Up," the collection of Fitzgerald's essays, notebooks, and letters edited by Edmund Wilson, which had been published by New Directions in 1945. I bought it and read it, and around that time I also discovered a first edition of Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" in the living-room bookcase. Matabell Minard, the socialite who owned the house before my family, had pasted her own Art Deco bookplate inside the cover. She had cut out and pasted beneath it a combined review of the Hemingway book and Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury." The reviewer had written, "The only question is whether that generation is yet articulate enough to express itself in a permanent novel." My first inkling that literary critics weren't God!

My mother was exactly the same age as Zelda, and my father was born within a few years of both Fitzgerald and Hemingway, so it was natural that I was interested in those writers. Children are profound absorbers of the habits of their parents' generation: there is a sense of both mystery and familiarity in its special blend of odors and style, in its silks and perfumy lipsticks, its meals taken upstairs on trays, its automobiles with white-walled tires. Though most of my childhood memories of my parents are from the forties, I could feel that they were formed by the twenties. They valued style and intelligence over ideology, and the way things looked mattered a great deal to them. My mother was an artist; though she had extraordinary clarity of vision about her modernist work (Motherwell said to me that her collages "were the real stuff"), she felt, like many women artists in her generation, that there was no place for her in an art world made up of male bohemians. "Men artists can be bohemians," she observed, "but women who are artists need to be outlaws." My father was a lawyer and businessman, whose literary taste ran to Milton, Shakespeare, and Turgenev; he was definitely not bohemian. My mother lost out, I thought, by turning her back on the bracing reality of his world, and he failed to comprehend her need to create something abstract and entirely new. I felt for them both. Maybe my fascination with Hemingway, and with Scott and Zelda, afforded me a way of finding out more about my parents; maybe observing my parents taught me something about those writers.

NINETEEN-TWENTY, the year the Fitzgeralds came to Westport, was a dynamite year. Jazz, the "new woman," bobbed hair, the automobile, and the idea of country life as a summer playground belonging to the middle as well as the upper class had permeated America. Expatriates living in Europe were making stylish the idea of place as an essential piece of aesthetic baggage. Provincetown was old-fashioned bohemia, Hollywood was in its infancy, and a good part of the Hamptons was still potato fields. Westport was small and rural enough, and unstructured enough socially, to attract a new class of bourgeois outsider-insiders, who did not observe the previously defined boundaries of class.

"Westport was neither an essentially idealistic colony nor a real Bohemia," the artist Guy Pène duBois pointed out in "Artists Say the Silliest Things" (1940). "Successes were mainly financial, its disinterested artists few. It was neither the serious Barbizon of the Millet period nor the arty Provincetown of today. It had grace . . . and tolerance." DuBois, a friend of Fitzgerald's, didn't quite grasp that Westport provided a home to the cultural development that came not only after Barbizon but also after Provincetown. Westport culture had a shiny professional edge to it: the new styles of art and commerce seemed as smoothly intermingled as Henry Luce's budding magazine empire, Busby Berkeley musicals, and the department-store dream palaces of the time.

Fitzgerald touched on the background to this cultural synchronization in his essay "My Lost City," where he wrote, about the New York of 1920, "There was already the tall white city of today, already the feverish activity of the boom, but there was a general inarticulateness. . . . Society and the native arts had not mingled—Ellin Mackay was not yet married to Irving Berlin." That phrase "the native arts" was a Fitzgerald euphemism for Jews—Jews like George Gershwin; like Gershwin's sister Frankie, whose husband, Leopold Godowsky, the co-inventor of the Kodachrome process, had bought an estate in Westport; and like the social reformer Lillian Wald, who lived near Fitzgerald on South Compo Road. Perhaps my parents fell into this "native arts" category, too. My mother, Frances Kurke, was the daughter of Polish-American Jews; in 1920, much to her father's chagrin, she was hanging out in Greenwich Village and working on Union Square, at Churchill Hall, one of the first advertising agencies, where she modelled as "America's middy-blouse girl" *and* did the typing. My father, Jack Probst, the son of Viennese Jews who immigrated to America in 1894, graduated from De Witt Clinton public high school and worked for the election of Woodrow Wilson before studying law and then going off to fight in the First World War. He was mustard-gassed in the battle of Saint-Mihiel in 1918, and spent three years recuperating in a military hospital in France. Back home, he opened his own firm, and eventually became an entrepreneur. He had no stocks or capital, so he lost nothing in the crash; his chief asset was his ability to negotiate, and he persuaded the banks to lend him money to

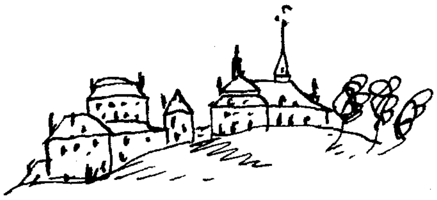
"Can you pray again in a couple of hours? He's in a meeting."

acquire heavy industry, an area virtually closed to Jews. He bought the E. J. Manville Machine Company, a steel concern in Waterbury, Connecticut, and, through it, in a joint venture with Western Union, he bought the Self Winding Clock Company, from the Pratt family and Standard Oil. The entertainment lawyer Sidney Cohen once explained to me that men like my father and his brother, Nathan Probst, who was a professor of constitutional law at St. John's at a time when there were almost no Jewish law professors, provided the next generation with a model of how to open the door to mainstream America—even getting "Protestant" banks, as Cohen put it, to back their ventures—while retaining their Jewish identity.

However odd Fitzgerald's choice of words may sound now, his perceptions—that a new society was created by a fusion between Christians and Jews, which began around 1920, and that prior to this moment New York hadn't quite jelled as a city—were on the mark. (Both Dalton and the New School, for example, were founded in 1919; these schools had no past and no church affiliation, and were supported by the new Jewish bourgeoisie, who needed to create institutions where their offspring wouldn't be humiliated.) Westport, which had no entrenched society—it had farmers, a smattering of millionaires with shore estates, the art community, and bootleggers—was a perfect setting for this cross-cultural fusion of Wasps and Jews (and artists and businesspeople). The town was a kind of laboratory version of what would soon be considered modern New York culture. Not far from Fitzgerald, in his beach cottage on South Compo Road, John Held, Jr., a boyhood friend of Harold Ross, who founded *The New Yorker* in 1925, was creating "the Held girl"—the flapper who appeared on the covers of *Smart Set* and became the image of the Jazz Age. The literary critic Van Wyck Brooks, the popular historian Hendrik Willem Van Loon (Fitzgerald had to be aware of Van Loon's 1921 best-seller, "The Story of Mankind," which emphasized the Dutch influence on the East Coast), Ford Madox Ford's brother, Oliver Hueffer, who was also a writer, and the illustrator Howard Munce all lived in Westport, and in the twenties a young, unknown Southern writer, Thomas Wolfe, spent considerable time with the editor Maxwell Perkins, who had a home in nearby New Canaan. Over the years, the dance-and-music world flocked there, too: Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, George Balanchine, and Oscar Levant settled in Westport. It became a town full of the inventors of culture, both highbrow and popular. Joanna Foster's "Recollections" and Dorothy and John Tarrant's "A Community of Artists" list, among others, the creators of the Gerber baby, Little Orphan Annie, Popeye, Superman, the Kewpie doll, Blondie, and Joe Palooka.

Westport, up to and beyond the Second World War, also had a theatrical aura. Dorothy and Lillian Gish and Eva Le Gallienne lived in town, and the actress Lucille Lortel founded the experimental White Barn Theatre there. Philip Langner, who used to own the Westport Country Playhouse, told me of the ease with which his father, Lawrence Langner, and Richard Rodgers, who lived in nearby Fairfield, could take shortcuts in planning projects that interested them for the Playhouse or the Theatre Guild's Broadway productions, both of which were spearheaded by Langner: "They just called one another with an idea, and said come on over to the house." The Welsh-born Langner, an international-patent lawyer, and the urbane Rodgers, of Russian-Jewish descent, were among the many examples of the continuing influence in society of the "native arts." The new world they inhabited wasn't strictly defined by either the Protestant or the old-line German-Jewish establishment.

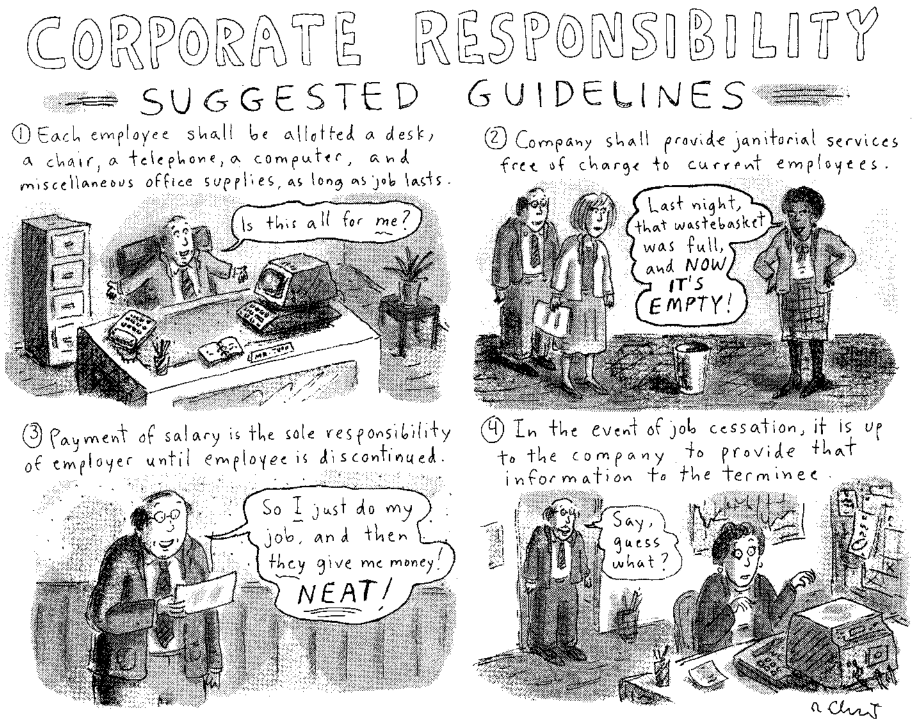
Alongside Westport's artistic flowering ran another strand of activity. By 1920, an onion blight had ruined the town's main source of income; the farmers had turned to melon growing, and the empty onion warehouses on Burying Hill Beach, near Sherwood Island, were rumored to be storehouses for booze shipped down the coast from Canada. Fitzgerald's neighbors on South Compo Road, the artist Edward F. Boyd and his wife, Marguerite Van Voorhis, once gave clothes and shelter to a near-drowned bootlegger who had swum ashore on Old Mill Beach after his boat hit the rocks off Sherwood Island. Westport was a notoriously open town: the laissez-faire panache of the local gendarmerie infuriated the federal authorities. In 1920, the *Westporter-Herald* reported that a local constable had denied federal agents permission to search trucks travelling on the Post Road, and had dismissed reports that sixty stills were operating in town.



Movie people and other out-of-towners, from New York, Boston, and New Haven, frequented the glamorous Mirimar Club, which had elaborate dance bands and a gambling casino, but the favorite "speak" of Westport's theatrical and arty crowd was the Compo Inn, run by Marion and Jake Levy. Marion Levy was famous for throwing parties with great food, liquor, and smart paying guests. DuBois painted her portrait, which became known as "The Bootlegger's Wife." He wrote, "As Mrs. Levy took the pose wearing an ermine cape, silver dress, pearl necklace and diamonds in great quantities, she said, 'As I stand here, I represent over fifty grand.' I painted the portrait very rapidly. . . . I have never done one with less interference and more pleasure. It is a splendid coincidence when one realist is permitted to do a portrait of another realist." He also observed, "In the prohibition period the summers at Westport . . . exceeded the riotousness of New York. There gin and orange juice ruled the days and nights. . . . Work was an effort made between parties."

IT'S clear that Westport helped supply Fitzgerald with the cultural mix—Jews and Christians, the arts, old money and the brash new kind—that defined his vision of the East Coast in the twenties. And the more I spoke to my childhood friends, the more I understood how clearly Fitzgerald saw what Westport represented to our parents; I began to feel that in fact there was more of Westport in Fitzgerald than I had thought.

One person I talked to was Tom Langner, Lawrence Langner's nephew, whose father, Herbert Langner, was a lawyer friend of my father's; Tom and his sister, Claire, were my closest Westport friends. "They were a generation bursting with anger and energy, and had enormous ambivalence about being Jews," Tom said of our parents' circle. "They worked hard and they played hard. . . . There were constant parties, and liquor flowed freely." At Great Marsh, we'd


CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
SUGGESTED GUIDELINES
① Each employee shall be allotted a desk, a chair, a telephone, a computer, and miscellaneous office supplies, as long as job lasts.
Is this all for me?
② Company shall provide janitorial services free of charge to current employees.
Last night, that wastebasket was full, and NOW IT'S EMPTY!
③ Payment of salary is the sole responsibility of employer until employee is discontinued.
So I just do my job, and then they give me money! NEAT!
④ In the event of job cessation, it is up to the company to provide that information to the terminee.
Say, guess what?
R. Chast

have thirty or forty people on a typical summer weekend, including relatives, my mother's women painter friends, my father's doctor (a morphine addict who was a friend of John O'Hara's), and my father's fishing pals. My father also hosted an annual all-male croquet tournament: the two hundred-odd guests were put up in Westport and fed at Great Marsh. The place was the center of my parents' universe: even our cars were fuelled by a gasoline pump on the property.

Last fall, I decided to make another trip to Westport—this time to visit the house on South Compo Road that the Fitzgeralds rented. It was their honeymoon summer, their first married summer in the East, and Zelda had desperately wanted to live near the beach; they stayed until October in "the Wakeman cottage"—so called for the Wakeman family, who had owned it for generations. Frank and Ann Pellegrino, the current owners of the cottage, which dates from the pre-Revolutionary period, agreed to see me. (They are Fitzgerald buffs.) The house faces the road, and the kitchen and some of the bedrooms are upstairs in the back, facing the Sound. Though the terrain is now thick with trees and is heavily populated, Frank Pellegrino pointed out that in 1920 it would have been farmland, cleared of trees. Because the whole area is built on a rise, he thought Fitzgerald would have had a view of the Sound from his bedroom.

He also speculated that the best way for Scott and Zelda to go to the beach would have been to take a shortcut—a five-minute walk across the fields—to the beach that adjoins the Longshore Club, and swim off Hendrick's Point. "If they wanted to drive," he added, "they could have gone the long way, and taken the road that leads directly into Longshore." Though the Fitzgeralds also joined a nearby bathing club at Compo Beach, it seems more likely that Zelda's moonlight swims and wild beach parties—Wilson wrote about their "reveling nude in the orgies of Westport"—took place at the Hendrick's Point beach, just a few minutes away from their house.

In order to satisfy my old curiosity about whether Fitzgerald could have seen our pier, I drove "the long way" to the point—the only possible way now—and stopped by the Inn at Longshore. I climbed through some marsh shrubbery to get to the water's edge, and the fifteen-year-old in me got her answer: I saw our pier. I tried to see the bay as Fitzgerald had seen it, around the time when Matabell Minard lived in Great Marsh. The day was clear. To the south, across on the Long Island shore, is the tall white tower of Eaton's Neck Light, and much closer in, near Cockenoe Island, is the Peck Ledge Light. The topography between Longshore and the Wakeman cottage—the easy way you could get from one to the other, as Pellegrino had described it—struck me as vaguely familiar. I knew "Gatsby" almost by heart, and the narrator Nick Carraway's phrases about his irregular lawn abounding in small, muddy swamps and prehistoric marshes floated through my mind: "Instead of taking the short cut along the Sound we went down to the road and entered by the big postern." Which is what I had done. The Westport signs pointing to Easton and Weston popped into my consciousness. East Egg? West Egg? The description in "Gatsby" of the train station, the drawbridge, the road running by the railroad tracks, the valley of ashes, and the Italian child playing nearby sounded like the station in Saugatuck, which was then largely Italian.

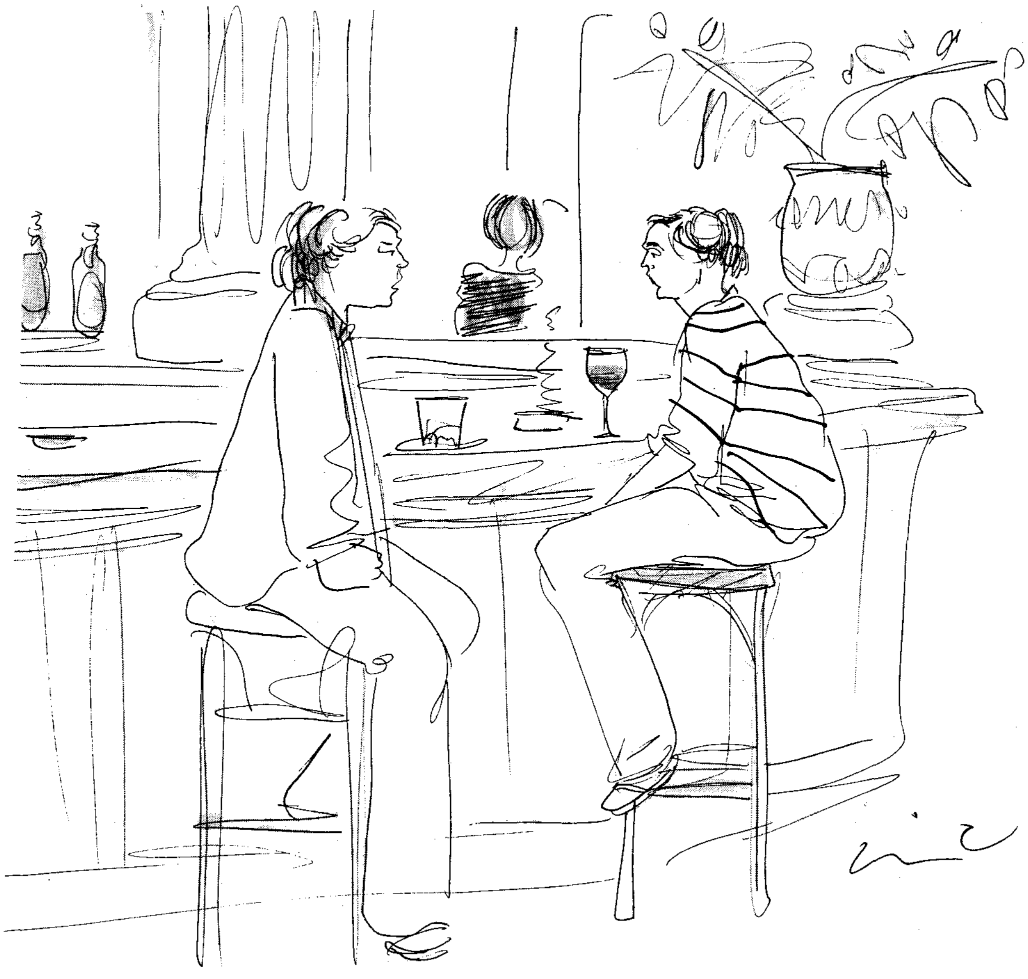
Was "Gatsby" entirely inspired by Long Island, as critics and scholars have always thought, or was it a blend of Fitzgerald's first beachy summer in Westport and his time in Great Neck? Viewed from the Connecticut side of the Sound, Long Island really did appear to be a symbol of the new world rising up from the sea. Scott and Zelda had lived in Long Island for a year and a half, from 1922 to 1924, before moving to the Riviera, where he completed "The Great Gatsby" in the fall of '24. But the time that had elapsed between his Great Neck life and his actual writing of the book struck me as too short for a novel as evocative and finished as "Gatsby." Also, he had been thinking for a long time of writing a novel about a Midwesterner confronting the East. Surely he must have drawn upon a synthesis of the five years starting from 1920 to create "Gatsby." Fitzgerald said that he had "set" the novel in Long Island, but he never pinpointed the reservoir of experience he had drawn upon. Certainly the Midwestern Nick's wonder and innocence as he confronts the East Coast for the first time, the sadness of the summer houses closed down in late fall, and Fitzgerald's awareness that he was defining a new outsider class had to have come in good part from Westport. Connecticut symbolized the Ivy League East that Fitzgerald felt had rejected him—far more than Great Neck, which was populated by show-business celebrities.

I was mulling this over while I stood in the parking lot next to the Inn at Longshore. I had begun to do some reading in the local library, and it occurred to me that the Fitzgeralds lived in Westport before the Longshore Country Club had come into existence. In 1920, the waterfront property had belonged to a flamboyant, gregarious millionaire, Frederick E. Lewis, who had an estate of nearly a hundred and seventy-five acres on it. Lewis is part of Westport lore: he was famous for his wondrous parties. In 1917, in order to raise money for the war effort, he imported an authentic Wild West show, with real Indians and cowboys, for a gala on the beach. He built a big marina on his beachfront and filled it with yachts, some of which the Coast Guard borrowed during the war. Elephants from the Hippodrome and the Macdougal Alley camels were brought in by boat from New York; the actress Marie Dressler ran a dog show; Ina Claire performed in a vaudeville act directed by David Belasco. The governor of Connecticut came, and a guest flew over from Port Washington in his private aeroplane. Burritt Nash Wakeman, whose mother rented the cottage to the Fitzgeralds, remembers being part of a crowd that watched as the great Houdini, who was Lewis's guest, was lowered into the water while chained in a heavy box. A few minutes later, to Wakeman's relief, Houdini jumped triumphantly out of the water.

The Lewis showplace struck a Gatsby chord, and after I got back to New York I made a few calls to people I knew in Westport. At their suggestion, I talked to Howard Gault, who, at seventeen, had trucked the granite for a stone dock that Lewis built for himself. Gault sounded irritated still that the Longshore Club had wrecked the magnificent dock. "The fools undermined it, and all that beautiful cut granite fell," he said. "They destroyed one of the best docks around." Then he started to talk about the tower that Lewis had erected on his private beach. "It was a wonderful thing—sort of like an imitation lighthouse. Mr. Lewis was a very fine sort of gentleman."

"The tower?" I thought of Nick Carraway's description of Gatsby's waterfront: "At high tide in the afternoon," he says, "I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam."

Then, there was Lewis's relationship with Westport's oil millionaire, Edward T. Bedford, who maintained a private racetrack in Greens Farms and was a protégé of Charles Pratt, the most important person at Standard Oil next to John D. Rockefeller. Bedford became both a director of the company and one of Rockefeller's chief agents in marketing oil products abroad. Together, he and Lewis were Westport's philanthropic angels: Bedford's family were patrons of Lewis's war-effort party. "I've got a nice place here," Gatsby tells Nick Carraway, and then "he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep, pungent roses, and a snub-nosed motor-boat that bumped the tide offshore." He explained to Nick that "it belonged to Demaine, the oil man." Could Fitzgerald have incorporated into the scene both Lewis's estate and Bedford's nearby white palace, which had extraordinary gardens and topiary and rivalled the Long Island showplaces? I don't know whether Lewis's dock had a green light, but if you had looked straight across to Long Island at night from Lewis's beach you would have seen the green flashing lights of some of the buoys off Saugatuck. Indeed, the setting of Fitzgerald's Westport place—the cottage next to the millionaire's estate, the view of grand houses on the shore across the bay—corresponded with striking accuracy to Nick's setup next door to Gatsby.



"I tore her clothes off. She tore my clothes off. We put our clothes back on. That was my summer. How was yours?"

The lush beach parties, bootlegging, and movie activity that were to reappear transformed in Fitzgerald's fiction were all happening within a two-mile radius of his cottage. In "The Beautiful and Damned," which was a sort of trial run for "The Great Gatsby," the Jewish film producer Joseph Bloeckman, of Films Par Excellence, lives in Connecticut; in "Gatsby" Bloeckman becomes Newton Orchid, one of the guests at Gatsby's fabulous party—"Newton Orchid, who controlled Films Par Excellence," as Carraway describes him. Ring Lardner, Fitzgerald's best friend in Great Neck, was appalled that in "Gatsby" Fitzgerald described Penn Station as having two levels when it had only one; also, you don't go from Penn Station to the Upper West Side via Fifth Avenue, as Nick does when he, Tom Buchanan, and Myrtle Wilson are on the way to Myrtle's sister's apartment. Fitzgerald must have been describing the two levels of Grand Central, the station for Connecticut: Nick Carraway's haunts—the Yale Club, on Vanderbilt Avenue, and the Murray Hill Hotel, on Park and Fortieth—were right next door.

I soon found other connections between Gatsby's contemporaries and Westport history. Although the character Meyer Wolfshiem was based in part on the sophisticated gambler-gangster Arnold Rothstein—Wolfshiem "fixed the World's Series back in 1919," which Rothstein was supposed to have done—the resemblance between them is not total. Rothstein was the son of a well-to-do Jewish merchant, while Wolfshiem was ostensibly from the Lower East Side. I found a more striking resemblance between the Wolfshiem character and Bald Jack Rose, who was said to have been the head of the Westport bootlegging ring that supplied the Levys with liquor. A Damon Runyonesque type who sought the company of writers, Rose, like Wolfshiem, dabbled in cinema, and, more significantly, was involved in the murder of the Manhattan gangster Herman Rosenthal in 1912, in front of the Café Metropole. In a sensational trial, which revealed police collusion with the mobsters, the police lieutenant Charles Becker was convicted of ordering Rosenthal's murder, and was later executed. But in a classic account of the Becker-Rosenthal affair, "Against the Evidence," Andy Logan indicated that Jack Rose, who was Becker's bagman, may have made the final decision to have the hoods murder Rosenthal rather than scare him—and, though Rose was standing across the street from the Café Metropole when Rosenthal was gunned down, he was never charged with the crime, because he became a coöperative witness. All this seems to feed directly into the scene in "Gatsby" where Nick Carraway is talking with Wolfshiem and Wolfshiem recalls, in his Lower East Side accent:

> "The old Metropole . . . Filled with friends now gone forever. I can't forget so long as I live the night they shot Rosy Rosenthal there. It was six of us at the table, and Rosy had eat and drunk a lot all evening. . . . Then he went out on the sidewalk, and they shot him three times in his full belly and drove away."
>
> "Four of them were electrocuted," I said, remembering.
>
> "Five, with Becker."
>
> His nostrils turned to me in an interested way. "I understand you're looking for a business gonnegtion."

Pure Jack Rose!

Fitzgerald, the keen social observer, was right to set "The Great Gatsby" on Long Island, which symbolized gaudy wealth in the popular imagination, just as he was right to make the college men in "The Beautiful and Damned" Harvard men, and not men from Princeton, his alma mater. But the Westport that Jairus and Jabez described—the mansions, garages, and ramshackle business places—was apparently more significant to Fitzgerald than scholars have thought. The erroneous geography that critics have complained about wasn't the result of carelessness on his part; rather, the images he was seeing in his head were superimposed on the geography of the novel. And it makes sense that while he was writing the book, on the Riviera, memories of the honeymoon cottage he and Zelda shared adjoining a grand estate on the Sound would have surfaced with greater intensity than those of the monumental Long Island mansions he had glimpsed almost exclusively from the outside while he was living in a landlocked suburban house in Great Neck.

Fitzgerald himself pinpointed 1920, his Westport year, as the crucial year of social change in America, and as the moment when he lost his young self. In "Early Success" he says, "In 1919 I had made $800 by writing. . . . In 1920 I had made $18,000. . . . The dream had been early realized and the realization carried with it a certain bonus and a certain burden." Then he describes driving along the High Corniche Road on the Riviera in the mid-twenties, which would have been the time he was finishing "Gatsby": "It was not Monte Carlo I was looking at. It was back into the mind of the young man with cardboard soles who had walked the streets of New York. I was him again—for an instant I had the good fortune to share his dreams. . . . But never again as during that all too short period when he and I were one person, when the fulfilled future and the wistful past were mingled in a single gorgeous moment." "The Great Gatsby" is profoundly memory-driven, and it is precisely this fusion of social reality with the submerged evocation of an almost unknowable sorrow and place—what remains unsaid in the novel—that makes it so abidingly compelling to the American imagination.

I WENT to Westport again late last winter, to the place where the Saugatuck River meets the Sound. The pink Mediterranean villa, built on rocks over the Sound, which my parents rented before buying Great Marsh, had been subdued into a neutral cream-colored abode to blend in with the gentrified Victorian houses surrounding it. There are no longer any splashy Italian villas in Westport; good taste reigns. I stood at the riverbank for a while, and as I drove back into Manhattan I looked up at the Schinasi mansion, on Riverside Drive and 107th Street. Had Fitzgerald, who lived nearby, walked past it? Was Leon Schinasi, to whom the Turkish Sultan gave three rare Arabian stallions, the model for Beluga, the tobacco importer at Gatsby's party? Nobody knew better than Fitzgerald how deeply the split between money and culture gnawed at the American soul. In Europe, culture meant power; it was part of the patrimony. For Americans, the romantic dream was business. I thought about Westport as the lights came on in the city, zigzags of it streaking the Hudson River, and I turned off the highway and headed home. We all have a bit of Gatsby in our past: Tom and Claire Langner, my brother and I—like so many Americans—are Gatsby's children. ♦

BOOKS

CHARM'S WAY

How Noël Coward amused himself.

BY JOHN LAHR

EARLY in what became a long and phenomenal career, Noël Coward was dubbed Destiny's Tot. His life was dedicated to making that destiny manifest. Born on the eve of the new century, he personified the deliriums of the age: momentum, industry, output, fame, and enchantment. With the 1924 success of "The Vortex," his play about drugs and family dysfunction, Coward was transformed in the English press from Boy Playwright to Noël the Fortunate—the "belle of the ball" he'd dreamed of becoming since he made his professional acting début, at the age of eleven. Now, nearly a quarter of a century after his death, Coward is still news: this year sees the publication of Philip Hoare's major new biography, "Noël Coward" (Simon & Schuster; $30), and the paperback edition of "My Life with Noël Coward" (Applause; $16.95), a memoir by Coward's longtime companion Graham Payn, with Barry Day. There is also an upcoming revival on Broadway of his self-parody "Present Laughter," with Frank Langella as the preening Coward surrogate, Garry Essendine. "Everyone worships me, it's nauseating," Essendine says. In life, Coward could sound as preposterously grand: "I'm an enormously talented man, and there's no use pretending that I'm not," he told the London *Sunday Express* in 1965.

"You've got to watch your own legend," Coward told Judy Garland. He watched his like a hawk. He mythologized his heterosexual persona in the memorable comedies in which he took the romantic lead. His elegant introductions to his published plays preëmpted debate about them. His excellent three volumes of autobiography—"Present Indicative," "Future Indefinite," and "Past Conditional"—gave his big-bowwow life the proper amount of humility and humor while drawing a veil over much of his emotional and all of his sexual life. Since Coward's death, his literary executors have also been his biographers and chroniclers: his godson Sheridan Morley and his companions, Graham Payn and the late Cole Lesley, have been responsible for at least five Coward books, including the discreetly edited "Noël Coward Diaries." His legend is preserved in the amber of anecdote. But no one seeks fame out of happiness; until Hoare, no one had acknowledged the monster in the Master.

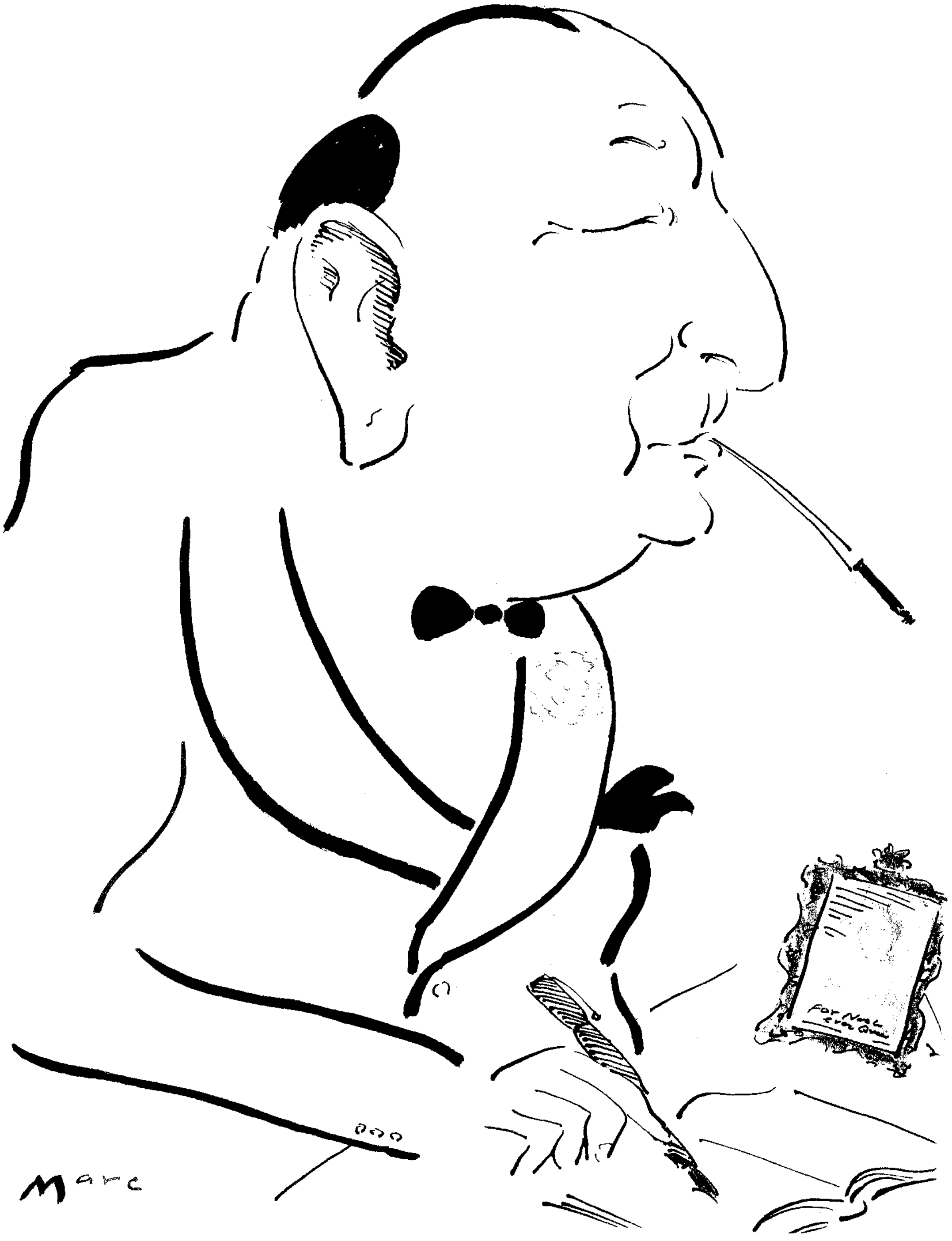
"The age of the common man has taken over a nation which owes its very existence to uncommon men," Coward wrote in his diary in 1956. He himself was by then a queen bee, but he had started out much lower down in the British hive. Coward grew up in a suburban outpost of London. His father was a piano salesman, from whom Coward got a love of music but, it seems, little else. His older brother, Russell, died of meningitis at the age of six; Coward bore the burden not only of a dead sibling but of an ineffective, idle father. "What have you ever done for me or for either of your two fine boys to help them on in life?" Coward's mother, Violet, wrote to her husband in 1930. Coward saw himself as the man of the house, and his inevitable inadequacy created the panic he turned into drive.

Coward didn't so much seize the day as grab it by the short and curlies. Long before he attained stardom, he was stalking the celebrated, trying to crash the aristocracy of success. In "Present Indicative" Coward lists thirty-six famous people with whom he was acquainted between 1917 and 1919. "I was progressing like wildfire," he writes. A self-educated upstart, he was frequently frowned on by the higher literary orders. (Once, Coward accosted Lytton Strachey, saying, "I met you a few years ago." "Rather a nice interval, don't you think?" Strachey said.) Coward's response was to invent a talentocracy, which he celebrated on the stage in "Hay Fever" and "Design for Living," and in which he could be a pillar in real life. His name was linked to the performing legends of his generation: Marlene Dietrich, Bea Lillie, Judy Garland, Gertrude Lawrence, Mary Martin. "I am related to no one except myself," he said as early as 1920.

Once Coward had buttonholed the public, he held it captive with scores of plays, more than a dozen films, hundreds of songs, volumes of autobiography, stories, and verse. "I am all that I have, to work with, to play with, to suffer and to enjoy," he said; and he made his self-involvement an enduring sensation. Coward's de-luxe persona—an irresistible combination of surplus and skepticism—became the young ideal: a potent amalgam of pain concealed and amusing malice. Cecil Beaton wrote in "The Glass of Fashion," "All sorts of men suddenly wanted to look like Noël Coward—sleek . . . clipped and well groomed, with cigarette, a telephone, or cocktail in hand." He was, as Kenneth Tynan said, "the instant projection of a new kind of human being, which had never before existed in print or paint."

Coward was built for speed—tall, lean, and smooth. His wit defied gravity and eliminated friction. He wrote fast: "Hay Fever" in five days; "Private Lives" in four days; "Present Laughter" and "Blithe Spirit" in six days each. "The first rule of comedy is to play quickly," he said, and swiftness was also built into the clipped, staccato delivery of his one-liners and the agility of his comic playing. Momentum was part of the exhilaration and the exhaustion of the twentieth century, which Coward decoded for the British but borrowed wholesale from the Americans. "I found out what 'pep' meant," he told the New York *Times* in 1925. "And have tried to instill it into my London companions." As Philip Hoare puts it, "by allying English humour to American pace, Coward would create his own successful style."

Coward, who thought the race was to the swift, sometimes stumbled and collapsed from exhaustion: he had nervous breakdowns in 1918, 1926, and 1936. On this subject, too, Hoare has more to



Coward told Judy Garland, "You've got to watch your own legend." He watched his like a hawk.

COURTESY OF MARC BOXER ESTATE

say than any of Coward's previous biographers. Coward was in perpetual flight from his fragile inner life to his secure public one. His performing self was unrelenting and, finally, attenuating. "Beating & beating & beating—'an omelette without eggs' said A," Virginia Woolf recounted Aldous Huxley's remark about Coward's manic social behavior. "Nothing there but the heroic beating." But the pace of Coward's best comedies, which are light, streamlined, and apparently without plot, is also emblematic of his era: it captures the desperation beneath the gaiety of postwar British life. "In lives of leisure / The craze for pleasure / Steadily grows," Coward sang in "Poor Little Rich Girl." "Cocktails and laughter, / But what comes after? / Nobody knows."

Coward's insouciance, which called it quits with meaning, is at the core of his gallant sense of fun and of the enduring poignance of his image and his comedies. "We none of us ever mean *anything*," Sorel Bliss says at the beginning of Coward's best play, "Hay Fever." Still, for the Blisses and for Coward, role-playing is a game that substitutes for meaning and becomes reality. "Is this a game?" one bewildered house guest asks the histrionic actress Judith Bliss. "Yes," she says. "And a game that must be played to the end!" Coward was a spellbinder trapped by the spell he cast. "Life is nothing but a game of make-believe," he wrote in one of his earliest songs, from "London Calling" (1923); having invented a persona that corrupted the world with pleasure, he contrived to play the role to the grave. On Coward's memorial stone at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey his famous summation of himself is allowed to stand for eternity: "A Talent to Amuse." The phrase is a typical piece of stage-managed Coward modesty; in death as in life, he managed to seem, as he said, "incredibly unspoilt by my success." But, having worked hard not to let his ambition show, he knew better.

"I *am* England; and England is me," Coward said in a less guarded moment, in 1965. He had a case. To imagine Britain without Coward between the nineteen-twenties and the nineteen-fifties is like trying to imagine America without jazz. Coward's persona not only ventilated English life but helped to create the fiction of British cultural style. He "invented the concept of cool," Tynan said of Coward's professional sang-froid, which Coward himself described as "immense calm with your heart pounding." An entrepreneur of expectation, Coward, in his plays and songs, however uneven, gave back to the nation a defining sense of confidence and coherence. His early comedies shaped the bittersweet buoyancy of the twenties and thirties; his extraordinarily successful film "Brief Encounter," directed by David Lean, consolidated Britain's sense of loss after the Second World War. His songs—in their sentiment and their satire—memorialized England and Englishness: "London Pride," "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," "Don't Let's Be Beastly to the Germans," "The Stately Homes of England," "There Are Bad Times Just Around the Corner." History is fable agreed upon; Coward's popular historical tales soon became incorporated into the nation's patriotic sense of the scheme of things. "Cavalcade," "This Happy Breed," and the Second World War naval movie "In Which We Serve," which won him a special Academy Award in 1943, were phenomenal successes, for they retold the big events of the century with Coward—as either actor or director or both—at the imaginative center of national conflict and continuity.

But the legend that Coward cared most about and which he cultivated best was his own. According to his good friend Rebecca West:

> He talked constantly about himself, thought about himself, catalogued his achievements, evaluated them, presented to listeners such conclusions as were favourable, and expected, and waited for applause. His sensitivity knew this and was shocked, and he regularly rough-housed his own vanity by considering himself in a ridiculous light. This he did for the good of his soul.

In 1960, after turning down a TV special with Ethel Merman, Coward confided in a letter to his agent that his intention was to "write one more good musical, several more good plays and a few more good books. By doing this my whole legend will be properly consolidated."

COWARD'S life and work have been remarkably resistant to interpretation. This is due in part to the puritanical English bias against the seriousness of comedy and in part to the discretion of the keepers of Coward's literary flame. Philip Hoare's well-written and scrupulously researched biography is a welcome departure. The biography may not risk much bold interpretation, but, in our gender-obsessed moment, Hoare is at liberty for the first time to bring Coward's appetite for sex and his appetite for success into one narrative. These issues bear a significant relationship to the artifice of Coward's literary style, which found a way of admitting camp into his work despite—or perhaps because of—his rock-solid public image. Even if Hoare doesn't pursue the contradictions, his sprightly biography at least raises them and adds a new dimension to our understanding of Coward. Coward's darker and more turbulent emotions give texture to that great huzzah which he called his life, and they make Hoare's retelling of Coward's story the most vivid, insightful, and fascinating so far.

Coward privately denied having ever had sex with a woman, and, when Gore Vidal asked if that meant even Gertrude Lawrence, Coward shot back, "Particularly *not* with Miss Lawrence." But Coward was vigilant about his matinée-idol persona. "Marlenah!" he is reported to have addressed Dietrich at a dress rehearsal in the late thirties. "I must not appear effeminate in any way. Do be a dear—watch out for anything that could be considered less than 'butch.' If you see me being at all 'queer,' tell me immediately." Coward's joke about himself in "Present Laughter" is that "I am always acting—watching myself go by." Coward, who, like Essendine, was forever checking himself in the mirror, counselled swishier members of the brotherhood to do the same. "It's important not to let the public have a loophole to lampoon you," he told Cecil Beaton, who wrote the conversation right into his 1929 diary. Beaton goes on, "That, Coward explained, was why he studied his facade. Now take his voice: it was definite, harsh, rugged. He moved firmly, solidly, dressed quietly. 'You should appraise yourself,' he went on. 'Your sleeves are too tight, your voice is too high and too precise. You mustn't do it. It closes so many doors. It limits you unnecessarily. . . . I take ruthless stock of myself in the mirror before going out, for even a polo jumper or an unfortunate tie exposes one to danger.' "

Dissimulation was always the name of Coward's game. In public, this was expressed by charm ("An extra politeness," he said, "which is not entirely real"); onstage in his best comedies it was expressed through frivolity and talk about frivolity which devalued all that was grave and dark ("Be flippant," Elyot says in "Private Lives." "Laugh at everything, all their sacred shibboleths. Flippancy brings out the acid in their damned sweetness and light"); in song, female voices broadcast sentiments that would otherwise have been a criminal offense in Britain until 1967 ("Mad About the Boy" sang of "gay appeal / That makes me feel / There's maybe something sad about the boy"). In his romantic mood, Coward announced "I'll Follow My Secret Heart," but in his high-camp outrageousness his secret was apparent to those who had ears to hear. For instance, in "I Wonder What Happened to Him?"—a spoof of the British raj and the pukka colonial life—he sang about a "bloke in the Third":

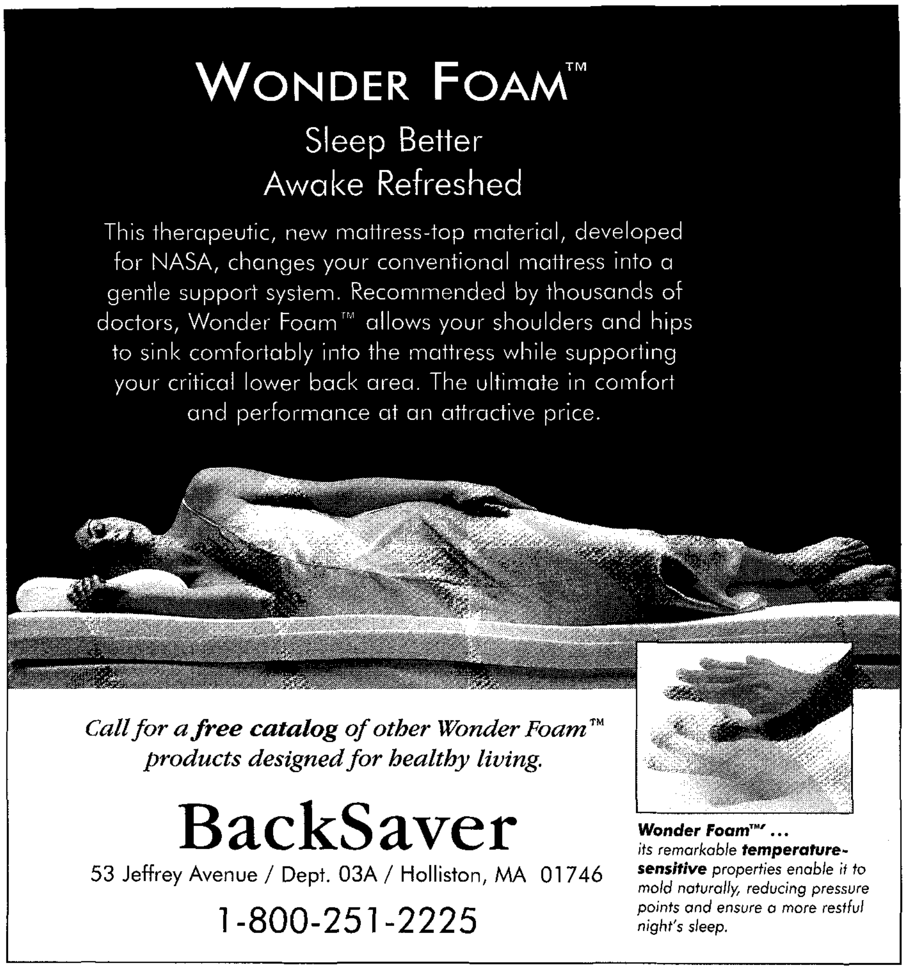
They had him thrown out of the club in
 Bombay
For, apart from his mess bills exceeding his
 pay,
He took to pig sticking in *quite* the wrong
 way.

Coward, like all great stars, wanted more than appreciation from the public; he wanted total surrender. But Coward, who kept such a tight rein on his feelings

("Lose yourself and you lose your audience," he said), was himself incapable of surrender. Even Graham Payn, who knew Coward from the age of thirteen, when he auditioned for him by tap dancing while singing "Nearer My God to Thee," and who became part of Coward's "family" in the mid-forties, says, "His manner created distance between himself and those who would approach him." Coward sang, "I'm no good at love," and in his diary he wrote, "To me, passionate love has always been like a tight shoe rubbing blisters on my Achilles heel. . . . I resent it and love it and wallow and recover . . . and I wish to God I could handle it, but I never have and I know I never will." Hoare's biography chronicles a long list of Coward's lovers, ranging from Prince George, brother of the Prince of Wales ("You were almost a King's mistress," Coward's agent teased him), through Louis Hayward, to Ned Rorem. Rorem wrote that Coward, as he left Rorem's Paris apartment, in 1961, whispered "Brief Encounter!" Even in sex, his legend came into it.

"It is wonderful what a little determined charm will do," Coward wrote in 1946. Charm was the acceptable face of his tyrannical will, and some of the best passages in Hoare's account describe instances when the ruthlessness and hysteria that drove Coward showed through the debonair mask. His temper tantrums when he was thwarted were legendary. He would throw himself face down on the sofa and sob with self-pity "I wish I were dead" or "What *am* I to do?" Coward, who, Tynan observed, "never suffered the imprisonment of maturity," also kept an enemies list—a little black book filled with the names of those who had hurt him in his rapid rise to stardom. "And hurt—and stab—them he most certainly did . . . until every name was wiped off," one old friend wrote. Coward's appetite for vindictive triumph is a barometer of his buried sense of humiliation. But the instinct for getting even is also Coward's spiritual link to the great comedians of every era.

Coward had a good line in bitchery: "Keir Dullea, gone tomorrow." His wit could also be affectionate ("Dear 338171," he wrote to T. E. Lawrence in the R.A.F. "May I call you 338?") Coward is incomparable when the authority of his swank charm and the hostility in his guarded heart collide, as in his comic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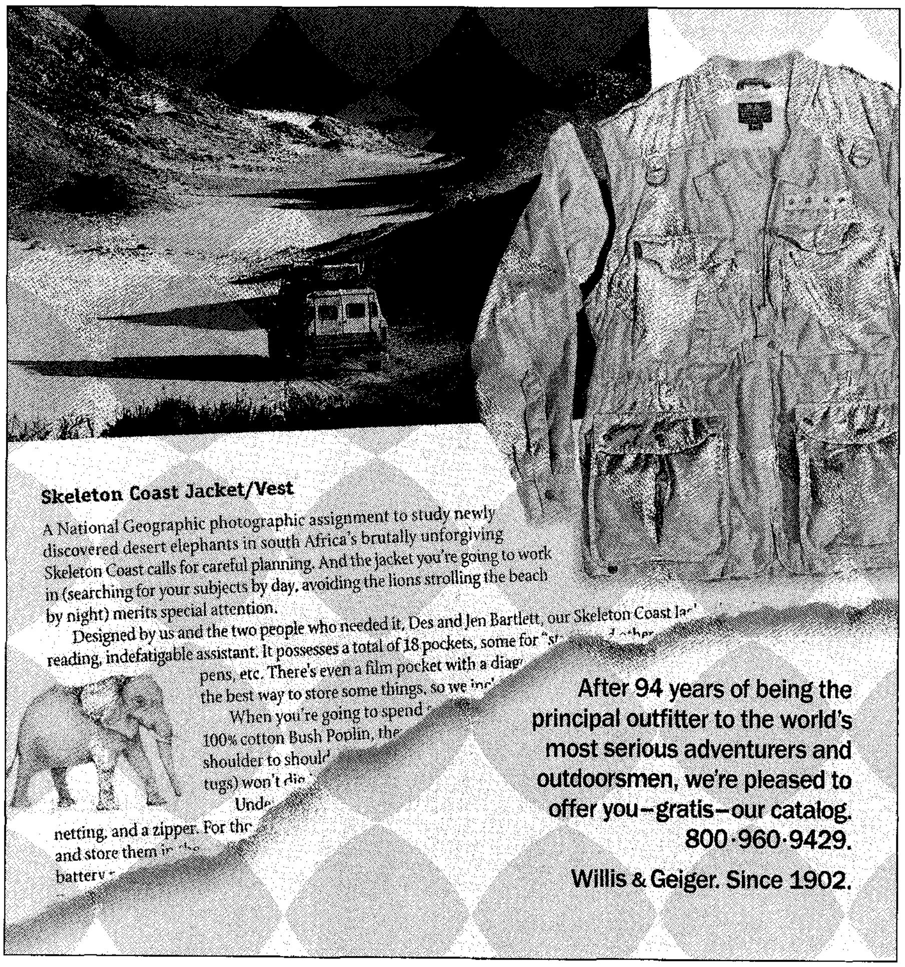
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song rebuking a stage mother, "Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs. Worthington":

> Though they said at the school of acting
> She was lovely as Peer Gynt,
> I'm afraid on the whole
> An ingénue role
> Would emphasize her squint.

In his lifetime, Coward's wit was often compared to Oscar Wilde's. This is a misconception of Coward's gadfly genius. Coward was a mischief-maker, not a maverick; his wit fought no battles except to endear him to the public. Attack was the point behind Wilde's epigrammatic style; retreat was Coward's modus vivendi. The stage pictures incarnate the mission of Coward's laughter, which was not to confront suffering but to avoid it at any cost. In "Hay Fever," "Private Lives," "Present Laughter," and "Blithe Spirit," the characters end each play, like their creator, tiptoeing away from chaos.

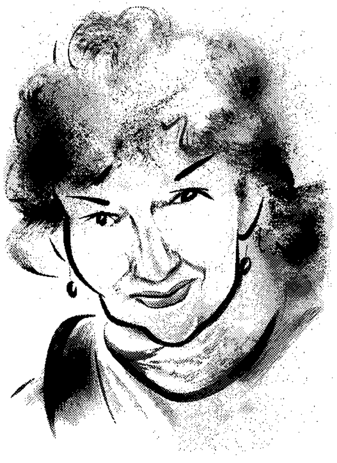
After the cataclysm of the Second World War, Coward's posh persona was more an irritant than an inspiration to the welfare state. "When the wind and the weather blow your dreams sky high," he sang, "Sail away." In the late nineteen-forties, he did just that, living first in Jamaica, then—as a tax exile—in Bermuda and in Switzerland. He became a stranger to England; in a sense, he had always been a stranger to himself. Coward's biographers have turned his story into a fairy tale of accomplishment. He did lead a kind of enchanted life; but, as in all fairy tales, it is the disenchanted who are free. It remains for future biographers to assess the emotional price that Coward paid for the enchantment he manufactured. For now, we must read between the lines of Hoare's judicious account, and decode the winsome weasel words that Coward himself left behind. ♦

SIMPLY LASTING

The legacy of an American poet.

BY DEBORAH GARRISON

I NEVER knew Jane Kenyon, who died last year, of leukemia, at the age of forty-eight, but I feel as though I did, because her poems are so frankly confiding, and the materials of her daily life, which were also the materials of her poetry, fall into a classic American genre that makes her world instantly recognizable to a newcomer. The sound of hammering coming from somewhere down the road, the sadness of newly mown hayfields, a casket being carried between narrow pews: Kenyon's existence, at least in her poetry, has a timeless, "North of Boston" quality. "Otherwise: New and Selected Poems" (Graywolf; $23.95), a volume containing twenty new poems and selected works from her four previous collections, confirms this sense of her as a good literary neighbor—a poet with absolutely no airs. She and her husband, the poet Donald Hall, lived on a New Hampshire farm that had been in his family for four generations, and there is something of the farmer's plainsong in Kenyon's approach to her surroundings. In "After the Hurricane," she walks out to the pond at the edge of the property with her dog, who races ahead:



Jane Kenyon

PAUL HAMLYN

> In the full, still pond
> the likeness
> of golden birch leaves
> and the light they
> emit
> shines exact. When the dog sees himself
> his hackles rise. I stir away his trouble
> with a stick.

Kenyon's approach to the world (to poetry) is summed up in that gesture, the slightly humorous but ingenious use of the stick. Her farmhouse pragmatism—she lives in nature but isn't afraid to muss it up, if need be—is just as fitting in town, at the dime store or the church fair; even her passing thoughts are conveniently lasting and useful, like the wooden clothespins she still has a

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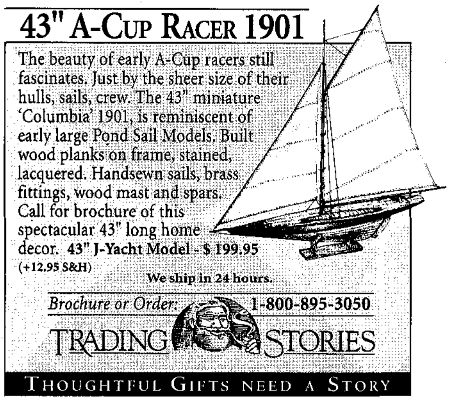
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need for in the nineties, or the small silver berry pails she remembers carrying into the Michigan woods as a girl. Yet Kenyon refuses to sentimentalize the sense of material American solidity that she conveys, and often undercuts it, as when she writes, in "Things," of how objects we love have a way of "simply lasting, then / failing to last," and roots for the mouse that is living on the batting in a hundred-year-old quilt: "She chewed a hole in a blue star / to get it, and now she thrives. . . . / Now is her time to thrive."

Kenyon's evenness of tone—her ability to mirror in the simplest language all that she sees—is the kind of smooth, dark ice that conceals wildly rushing waters. Like the dog who's spooked by his own reflection, she is the victim of her mind's constructions, of emotions coursing just under the surface of her linguistic composure. In "The Appointment," she is worrying over a visit to the doctor by her husband:

> It might have been the finest day of the summer—
> the hay was rich and dry, and the breeze
> made the heart-shaped leaves of the birch
> tell all their secrets,
> though they were lost on me. . . .
> If you
> had turned into the drive just then, even
> with cheerful news, I doubt
> I could have heard what you had to say.

This is perhaps Kenyon's central subject: the way what troubles the mind spreads outward to trouble the world, so that the two seem to vibrate in unison, in the same minor key. Her awareness of this crossing of wires, however, allows her not only to transmit signals but to receive incoming ones. During a heavy snowstorm, she lies in bed as though buried in a drift herself, picking up both the lethargy and the pleasure of the snow's will: "It falls on the vole, nosing somewhere / through weeds, and on the open / eye of the pond. It makes the mail / come late. . . . I'm sleepy and benign in the dark. / There's nothing I want." At the end of winter, she is equally suggestible in the opposite direction:

> As late as yesterday ice preoccupied
> the pond—dark, half-melted, waterlogged.
> Then it sank in the night, one piece,
> taking winter with it. And afterward
> everything seems simple and good.

Changes in the weather, both mental and actual, affect us all; indeed, Kenyon's gift is a reminder that there's a fine line between describing your day and writing lyric poetry. (Only rarely, at the end of a poem, does she insist on a note of description that is one degree too plain and keeps the lines from achieving poetic liftoff.) Her feel for the chemistry of our everyday moods is most evident in her writing about clinical depression, which she apparently suffered from throughout her life. In "Now Where?" she writes of the ubiquity of the thing that haunts her, that

> wakes when I wake, walks
> when I walk, turns back when I
> turn back, beating me to the door. . . .
>
> And so, like a widow, I lie down
> after supper. If I lie down
> or sit up it's all the same:
>
> the days and nights bear me along.

Her honesty about things pharmaceutical is an ironic (and, again, characteristically pragmatic) touch in the context of country life:

> High on Nardil and June light
> I wake at four,
> waiting greedily for the first
> notes of the wood thrush. Easeful air
> presses through the screen
> with the wild, complex song
> of the bird, and I am overcome
>
> by ordinary contentment.
> What hurt me so terribly
> all my life until this moment?

Kenyon shows her affinity with Anna Akhmatova, whose work she translated, when she is grappling with herself this way; oddly, the depression brings with it a Russian-like, spurringing passion for life—or, at least, the memory of such passion, which lurks in Kenyon's voice even when she sounds as though she can't go on. My favorite of all her poems, "Back," evokes that marriage of depression and passion, in a meeting-it-head-on tone that's uniquely hers. "Suddenly / I fall into my life again," she writes, expressing her faith that the observing mind, which regularly betrays us, will return us to the things we cared about in better times:

> I can find my way back. I know
> I will recognize the store
> where I used to buy milk and gas.
>
> I remember the house and barn,
> the rake, the blue cups and plates,
> the Russian novels I loved so much,
>
> and the black silk nightgown
> that he once thrust
> into the toe of my Christmas stocking. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

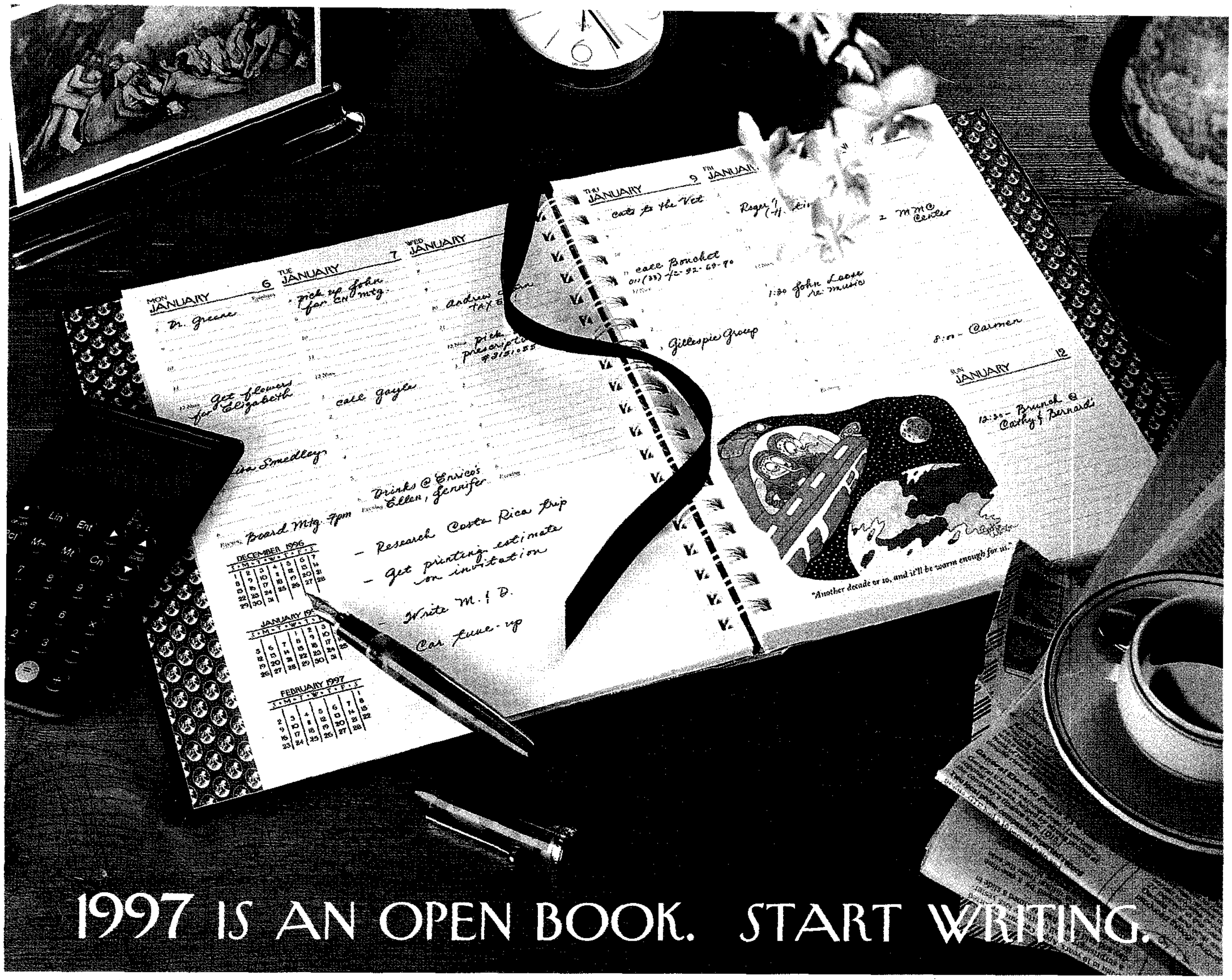
Medieval in L.A., by Jim Paul (Counterpoint; $21). Each sentence in this genial novel bursts with information, gorgeously put. On a weekend visit to L.A., the narrator visits a postmodern art show, watches Hasidim in Keds, and tries to make sense of it all. A medievalist by profession, he looks at his experiences in the light of Ockham, Berkeley, and Dr. Johnson, whose arguments were intended to bolster religion but proved more successful in scuttling it. Amid charming, clever friends who make rock videos and name cats after Marlene Dietrich, he worries about whether it is perceptions or objective knowledge that he, or anyone, lives by.

Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths, by Karen Armstrong (Knopf; $30). Jerusalem has been considered sacred for more than three thousand years, and during this time Jews, Christians, and Muslims have demonstrated their love for a God who is everywhere by killing one another to obtain exclusive possession of this or that holy site. In this superb book, Armstrong blends archeology and history with her own profound insight into humanity's religious impulses.

Holy Land, by D. J. Waldie (Norton; $24). This is a strange, almost mystical memoir about the evolution of a suburb and about a Catholic boy, now middle-aged, who has found himself unable to leave it. Lakewood, California, was built to be the world's largest housing development; Waldie describes with a mixture of sadness and awe the inexorable efficiency with which bean fields were divided and then subdivided for the thousands of tiny stucco houses to come. Like his neighborhood, the author's book is organized into small numbered lots—some no longer than a sentence—and in them he seeks to find his own place in the spiritual grid.

The Autumn of the Middle Ages, by Johan Huizinga; translated from the Dutch by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago; $39.95). This, the first unabridged English edition of the 1919 classic of cultural history, is far truer to the original than the 1924 translation, with which most readers are familiar: it re-creates Huizinga, much as he movingly re-created the lost era of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Burgundy. We witness a world of belief made manifest by the endless pealing of bells, ceremonial processions that last for days, and roses red and white—a world in which the tension between the real and the ideal is so tight that it almost snaps.

Connecting the Dots, by Maxine Kumin (Norton; $18.95). Kumin's is a poetry of wide sympathy and tact in which the ecumenical flavor is dominant, starting with the author's description of herself as a "Jewish agnostic" educated at a convent school. Here both the odd and the even are at home: New Hampshire farm country as well as cosmopolitan Boston, Heidegger and Berlioz interwoven among depictions of spring training, Bosnia, and a New Year's Eve party. This collection is full of generational severance and renewal, and a tart and compassionate irony: "If peace demands a lie/the Talmud says a lie's/permissible."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Get flowers for Elizabeth
call Gayle
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- Research Costa Rica trip
- get printing estimate on invitation
- Write M.I.D.
- Car tune-up
JANUARY 9
Cats to the Vet
call Bonchet
Gillespie Group
1:30 John Leese re: music
8:00 - Carmen
JANUARY 12
12:30 - Brunch @ Cathy & Bernard's
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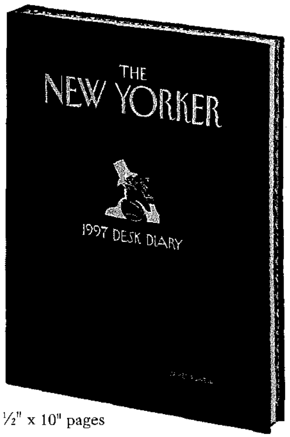
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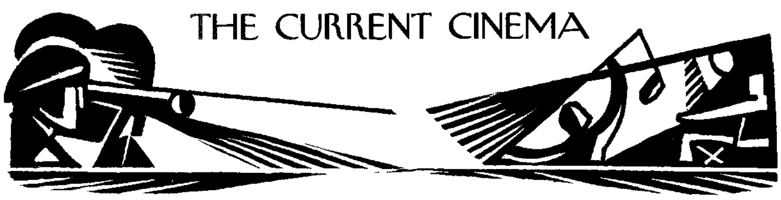


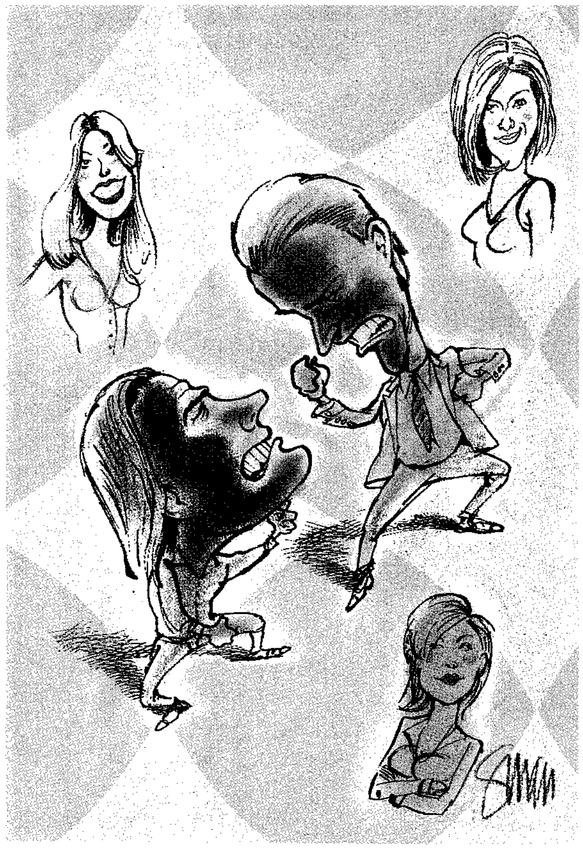
SMALL POTATOES

Irish-American romance and Maine uplift.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

"SHE'S THE ONE," the second movie by the twenty-eight-year-old writer and director Edward Burns, is just about indistinguishable from his puzzlingly successful low-budget début feature, "The Brothers McMullen" (1995). The new picture is actually a shade livelier than its predecessor, but, since it's a major-studio release, it lacks the plucky-independent aura that gave an illusion of substance to the undernourished humor of "McMullen." Audiences extend a certain amount of good will to first films made by energetic young people for ridiculously small sums of money, and the entertainment-news media—grateful for a novice director's colorful anecdotes about determination and camaraderie in the face of adversity—obligingly portray even the dullest and most conventional of these filmmakers as guerrilla-cinema heroes. (For that role, Burns, who is also the leading man in his movies, has the further advantage of being very good-looking.) "She's the One" trades the ennobling myth of poverty for some technical polish and a few established actors, and although in absolute terms there's a net gain, Burns no longer has any excuse for the stubborn ordinariness of his sensibility: it would take an awfully pliable imagination to romanticize this glossy, mildly amusing sitcom as the work of a vigorous and distinctive new comic artist.

Like "The Brothers McMullen," "She's the One" is a romantic comedy designed to illustrate the thesis that young Irish-American guys are utterly confounded by the opposite sex. Subtracting one brother from the first film's trio, Burns demonstrates his proposition by contrasting the amorous experiences of Mickey Fitzpatrick (played by the director), a New York cabdriver, and his brother Francis (Mike McGlone), an ambitious stockbroker. Although the amiable underachiever Mickey and the high-powered



The brothers Fitzpatrick and their women: Burns, McGlone, Bahns, Aniston, and Diaz in "She's the One."

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yuppie scum Francis appear to have nothing in common, they're about equally clueless when it comes to women, because—so we're given to understand—they have both been contaminated by the kind of thoughtless Old World machismo practiced and preached by their father (John Mahoney). Francis cheats on his wife, Renee (Jennifer Aniston), with a sexy blond Wall Streeter named Heather (Cameron Diaz), who is his brother's ex-fiancée; Mickey, who has impulsively married an attractive, intelligent girl named Hope (Maxine Bahns) less than twenty-four hours after picking her up in his cab, is faithful by temperament but nonetheless finds himself tempted by Heather—not so much out of genuine desire for her as out of an uncontrollable urge to compete with Francis. The movie makes it clear that in the world of the Fitzpatricks—father as well as sons—women are basically beside the point. Dad tells the boys, "You've got to do what makes you happy first," and he strictly excludes all women from his fishing boat; and the film, with heavy-handed irony, keeps his wife offscreen throughout. The men are so dim that they're actually shocked when their women rebel; a lot of the comedy of "She's the One" consists of the Fitzpatricks sitting around scratching their heads and trying to figure out what they're doing wrong.

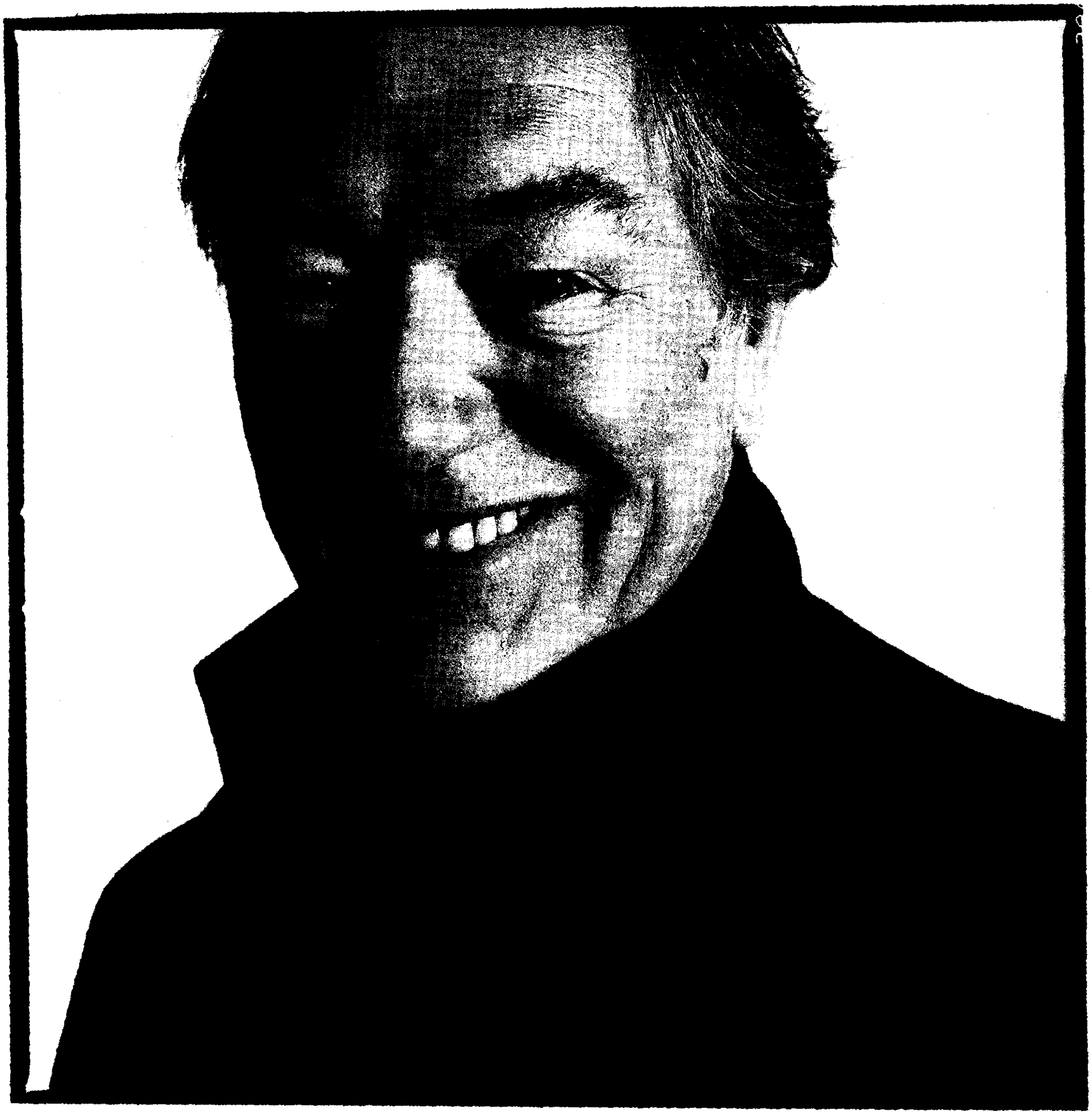
Burns doesn't make much of an effort to disguise the similarity of the themes and characters to those of his first film. (The presence in the cast of Burns, Bahns, and McGlone, all of whom were in "The Brothers McMullen," heightens the audience's sense of déjà vu.) In the absence of fresh ideas, he gamely tries to keep us awake by adopting a slightly brighter, more explicitly farcical tone. The expert comic timing of Aniston, Diaz, and (especially) Mahoney helps him out in this respect, and a terrific rock score, by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, often sustains the picture's momentum when the narrative threatens to stall. But Burns doesn't have a talent for breeziness. He falls back on low-road gags about vibrators and the sexual prowess of the elderly, and when he attempts "Seinfeld"-like farce plotting his desperation shows: at one point, Renee begins to wonder if Francis's lack of sexual interest in her means that he's gay—though she's never entertained the obvious suspicion that he's sleeping with another woman. Even romantic fluff requires greater precision than that.

The strain of trying to put the same thin story over a second time—it was barely robust enough for a single movie—undoes Edward Burns in "She's the One." All he can manage here is an awkward mixture of his first film's drab naturalism and a kind of comic artifice that he's clearly not comfortable with. The movie, unsurprisingly, winds up endorsing marital commitment and fidelity, and it's entirely appropriate that Burns himself plays the wavering but ultimately faithful Mickey. On the evidence of this movie, it seems unlikely that he'll ever stray from the home he made for himself in "The Brothers McMullen." For richer or for poorer, he's married to his theme, and his exertions in "She's the One" evoke a spouse's earnest attempt to rekindle the spark.

LEE DAVID ZLOTOFF'S "The Spitfire Grill," a little-people fable set in a picturesque village in Maine, is chock full of spiritual uplift: it features redemption, martyrdom, reverent mountain vistas, and cross-generational female bonding. The mountains (which are really in Vermont) perform reliably, but everything else about the picture is solemnly berserk. Zlotoff, a TV veteran making his feature-film début, somehow combines the sentimentality of a low-budget rural-virtue drama with the sleek calculation of a Lifetime cable movie. "Spitfire" is a true oddity: a film in which James Horner's swollen, bathetic music feels not only appropriate but richly deserved.

The screenplay (by Zlotoff) is constructed around the mysterious stranger figure of Percy Talbott (Alison Elliott), a quiet, waifish young woman, who, upon being released from a state prison, takes the bus to a small town called Gilead. She finds work as a waitress at the Spitfire Grill, an ancient diner owned and operated by a crusty widow named Hannah Ferguson (Ellen Burstyn), who initially views the sullenly pretty ex-con with suspicion. Hannah, of course, proves to be an old softie. (Even after Percy reveals that she did time for murder, Hannah comes to respect the disreputable girl's decency and courage.) Gradually, Percy begins to feel less uncomfortable with the good, plainspoken folks of Gilead. She befriends other lost souls, like mousy Shelby Goddard (Marcia Gay Harden) and a furtive hermit who lives in the woods behind the Spitfire, and gently draws both these sad specimens out of their shells: Shelby gets up the nerve to talk back to her overbearing husband, Nahum (Will Patton); the recluse deposits little birds made from leaves and twigs on Percy's windowsill. The snake in this north-country Eden is beady-eyed Nahum, who lurks in the tall grass for most of the picture and then slithers to the center of the stage in the last half hour, when his malevolence is needed to set up the melodramatic climax.

We're meant to be awed by the spectacle of all this human potential being realized, but the spiritual landscape of "The Spitfire Grill" looks phony and remote, like retouched mountains on a picture postcard. Although Alison Elliott, a former model, is more an appealing camera subject than a real actress, her lack of technique makes her seem, in this context, refreshingly natural. The more experienced Burstyn, Harden, and Patton appear to be engaged in a competition for most annoying Down East accent. (Harden, repelling a late surge by Patton, wins handily.) Burstyn struggles with her wretchedly written role, and for most of the picture you're not so much persuaded by her performance as simply grateful that she's not Shirley MacLaine. And, in the end, she manages to clear away some of the debris of feisty-oldster clichés and broad vowels, and unearth a nugget or two of recognizable human emotion. Maybe next time she and those gorgeous New England mountains will get a vehicle worthy of their talents. ♦



Michael Gambon, in London.

SHOWCASE BY DAVID BAILEY

GAMBON'S GAMBIT

FOR one crazy moment a few months ago, it seemed that American Actors' Equity might question the British actor Michael Gambon's "star status"—a galling possibility that quickly dissipated. Next week, in his Broadway début, Gambon begins previews for David Hare's "Skylight," at the Royale Theatre, in the role he originated at London's Royal National Theatre. This is good news for American theatregoers, since craftsmen of Gambon's calibre don't appear very often in a generation. Gambon is not your traditional leading man; he is tall and lumbering, and has a bit of a paunch. But within his large, rumpled frame is a player of delicacy and range; he has access to his lascivious as well as his furious side, which makes him adroit at comedy and drama alike. He made an international name for himself in Dennis Potter's surreal TV drama "The Singing Detective," where he gave an unnerving performance as a bedridden pulp writer who shuts out the hospital ward and the pain of psoriasis by descending into the hell of his memories. Gambon has also brought his subtle blend of vigor and irony to such roles as Jerry in Harold Pinter's "Betrayal"; the temperamental director in Alan Ayckbourn's "A Chorus of Disapproval"; and Volpone in the Royal National Theatre's revival of Ben Jonson's comedy. In "Skylight," Gambon's buccaneer-like quality suits the part of Tom Sergeant, who has returned to his old mistress after his wife's death. Broadway could not ask for a more distinguished performer to kick off its new season.

—JOHN LAHR

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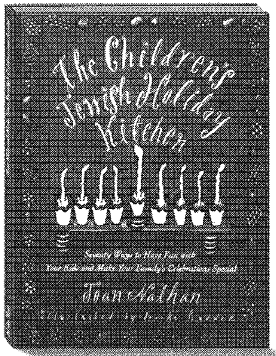
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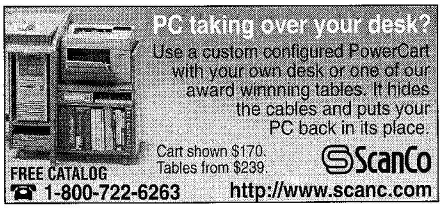

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MUSICAL EVENTS

FARMING OPERA

The summer harvest at Glimmerglass.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

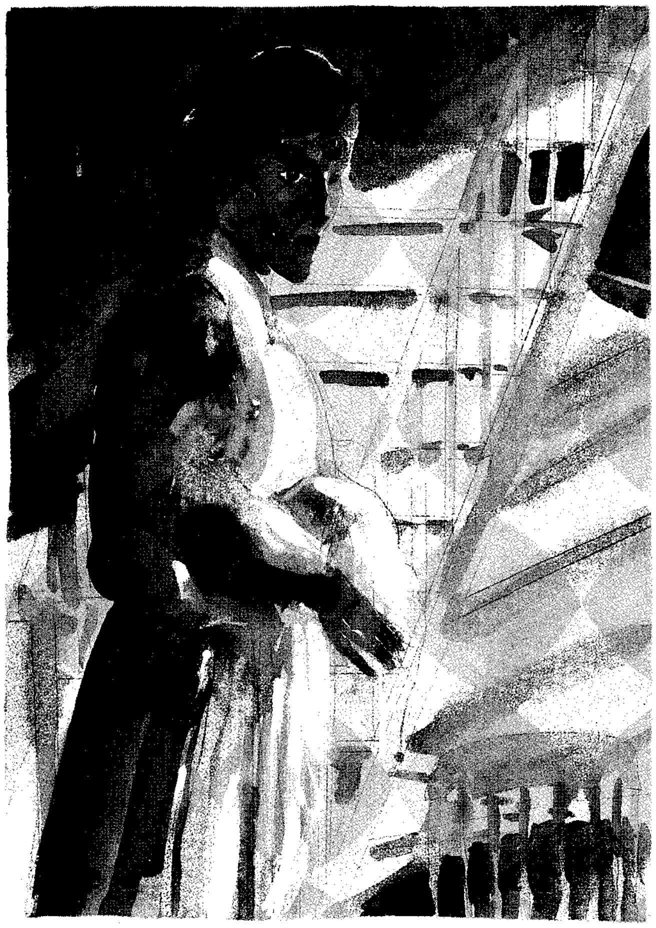
GLIMMERGLASS OPERA traces its origins to a 1975 production of "La Bohème" at the local high school—the kind of optimistic endeavor that must have been mirrored a thousand times in small towns across the country. But that start led in this case to the emergence of a company with an international reputation and international standards of excellence, and to the opening of a purpose-built theatre, all within twelve years. The reasons for such growth must include the fact that Cooperstown is a little island of prosperity in a region of modest farms and faded resort towns, a spot favored by continuing connections with the brewing industry that brought it wealth: the theatre is named for Alice Busch. Another important factor in this company's success must be the quality of the people running it—especially Paul Kellogg, who will remain as its artistic director while taking up the reins at City Opera this fall. There's also the charm of the location. As seen from a steep meadow on the western side of Otsego Lake, in the middle of New York State, the opera house is a cluster of gray-painted clapboard barns—a farm with a fly tower instead of the usual silo—rising against the ruffled surface of the water and the wooded hill beyond the farther shore.

In other respects, Glimmerglass Opera has a lot in common with other summer-festival companies, especially Glyndebourne, Santa Fe, and St. Louis. Unlike big-city opera houses—which, like big-city museums, are duty-bound to represent everything—these smaller outfits can be more specialized. They have the opportunity—and, no doubt, also the financial incentive—to find and foster young singers. They give conductors and directors time to rehearse thoroughly: when schedules are relaxed, nothing need be routine. And they offer their audiences, including their local audiences, a spirit of vacation, which Glimmerglass has interpreted as implying a taste for farce and a willingness to sample unusual repertory and sometimes adventurous productions.

Even in this year's relatively unexceptional season, Donizetti's "Don Pasquale" was the only approach to the canon. From the works of Mozart—the composer most regularly performed here—the offbeat choice was "La Finta Giardiniera." The company's association with the British conductor Jane Glover, and her spruce realizations of Baroque opera, was continued for the third successive season, with Cavalli's "La Calisto." And, as has also happened here before, a solid effort was made on behalf of a more recent opera that had fallen into neglect: Jack Beeson's "Lizzie Borden."

Such programming attracts an informal and enthusiastic audience, not unlike City Opera's, which suggests that Mr. Kellogg has had the right preparation. He seems, too, the right sort of person for his new job. No showman, he belongs to the quiet, intense school of impresarioship. Though anyone who runs an opera company must welcome luck, the Glimmerglass story has been one of thoughtful planning, commitment, judicious sampling of new talent, careful nurturing, and loyalty to artists. These are the qualities City Opera needs.

It's been widely reported that the new association between the two companies will be expressed practically, in joint productions: a start will be made next season, when City Opera takes over the 1992 Glimmerglass production of "The Turn of the Screw." But I wonder how close the marriage can or should be. The Alice Busch and State Theatre stages are similar in size, but, of course, the two houses differ vastly in audience capacity, and hence in the kind of opera and the kind of production they can best accommodate. The Glimmerglass theatre, seating just over nine hundred, is excellently suited in scale and acoustics to more intimate pieces; it's a place where singers can sing, and where they can use their eyebrows as well as their voices. Such a minutely detailed production as, for instance, that of "Don Pasquale"—which has been mooted for City Opera—would have to be changed, and probably coarsened, if it were to make an effect in the State Theatre. Also, it would be a great pity if Glimmerglass were to assume too much responsibility as a testing ground, so that it was hindered in following its own path.



Phyllis Pancella in Jack Beeson's "Lizzie Borden."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Even "Lizzie Borden," which was born at City Opera, in 1965, is a piece whose translation now to a major public forum would be unmerited but for which the occasional festival airing may be justifiable. Mr. Beeson's recognition that the Borden case is "a latter-day New England Elektra story"—to quote the note he provides for the recent CD reissue on CRI of the original-cast recording—makes one ask whether the subject really needed, after Strauss, another treatment in terms of straight operatic melodrama. Of course, Mr. Beeson's musical décor is different, springing from revivalist hymns rather than from Viennese waltzes, and his style profits from another half-century of history, mildly recalling almost everything from Copland to Berg. But his music tells us little about his characters, and doesn't override the awkwardnesses and implausibilities of Kenward Elmslie's libretto, which piles on motivations for Lizzie's odd behavior to the point of ridiculousness: veneration of her dead mother, identification with her father, lust for her father (and therefore jealousy of her stepmother), jealousy of her sister (and therefore lust for her sister's boyfriend). "If there is any substantial miscalculation," the composer has also said, "the audience won't go up the stairs with Lizzie." Oh, we went up the stairs all right. Her troubles had been laid on so thick that the problem was to stop us from cheering when she picked up the axe.

Rhoda Levine's production of the piece was valiantly sympathetic, and benefitted from a simple, elegant set by John Conklin, which echoed the light-gray walls of the Busch Theatre and unashamedly featured a staircase right from the start. After all, when the title is "Lizzie Borden" there's not much hope for dramatic surprise. The slow fire of the score was fanned with much energy by Stewart Robertson, Glimmerglass's musical director, and there was a good cast, led by Phyllis Pancella, in the title role. Not much more could have been done.

Mr. Robertson and another excellent team of singers—including William Burden as an effortlessly lyrical Belfiore and Sondra Radvanovsky as a luscious Arminda—were responsible for most of what was good about the production of "La Finta Giardiniera." This is an extraordinary score, composed when Mozart was eighteen and ready to strike out in all sorts of disorderly directions. Mr. Robertson rode with its spirit. A great tumble of musical invention sends the characters haywire: the young composer plays with them as with so many puppets, and the heartlessness of the piece is at once exhilarating and alarming. Unfortunately, Mark Lamos's production sought to explain the jolts and swerves in the drama as slapstick comedy, with the obnoxious addition of a mute, prancing, silver-suited boy Mozart. Further cheapening was offensively offered by the titles. The set (by Michael Yeargan) and the lighting (by Robert Wierzel) were ravishing, as if prepared for an altogether different staging.

The "Calisto" production was also a letdown—a misalliance of primness in the pit and vulgarity in the dramatic performance. Again, the stage looked set for something more interesting: Mr. Conklin, in his second production of the season, provided a post-apocalypse shattered earth, on which we saw a merry sporting of lewd gods, pliant nymphs, and satyrs with ostentatious genitalia. David A. Walker, one of these last, afforded the unusual pleasure of a lusty countertenor. Steven Tharp beautifully interposed the haunting phrases in Pan's music which could have been penned by Puccini a quarter of a millennium later. Christine Goerke was a noble Juno. The delights were all here, in the bit parts.

Best at Glimmerglass this season was the "Don Pasquale." Leon Major's "ideas" as director—to Molièrize the setting and present Norina as a professional actress—weren't nearly as important as the efficiency and imagination of his comic business: nobody who saw this production will ever look at double doors, or wigs, in quite the same way again. Joseph Rescigno, conducting, backed up the wit onstage, and there was a three quarters splendid cast, with Laura Claycomb zesty and accurate in Norina's coloratura, Stephen Powell assured and playful as Malatesta, and Kevin Glavin unstoppable in the title role. It was a pity the Glimmerglass flair was missing or hampered elsewhere in the season.

What remains special here is what is always the same. Just a short stroll beyond the theatre is a swamp sanctuary at the lakeside, where fish dart and turtles rootle in the shallows that support white and yellow waterlilies, where the banks are ablaze with purple loosestrife, and where the music is that of birds, bullfrogs, and cicadas. ♦

SHOUTS & MURMURS

MY AD

BY MARTIN AMIS

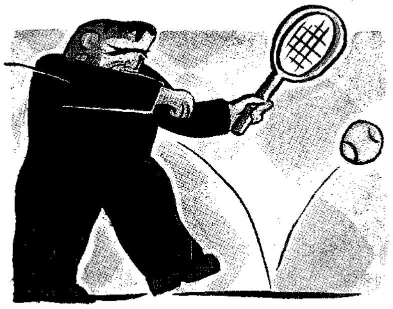
EVERY couple of years, I improve and update the Tennis Monster. The Tennis Monster is the kind of ultimate player that Baron Frankenstein might assemble, working in close conjunction with some Floridian guru like Nick Bollettieri. Here's how he's looking:

Head: Muster. Legs: Chang. (This is already a fine start.) Hands: Stich. Armpits: Courier (still the No. 1 sweater boy). Torso: Becker. To wire the actual shots, one would simply cannibalize the top two Americans. First serve, second serve, overhead: Sampras. Forehand, backhand, return of serve: Agassi. And then you'd loot Edberg for the volleys.

This year, at Wimbledon, I suspected that Baron Bollettieri had gone into the lab and come up with the hulking violence of Mark Philippoussis. You could practically see the bolts sticking out of his neck. But then the Baron calmed down, and produced Richard Krajicek. *That* explained the mysterious absence, in the later stages, of all the major stars: they were lying in heaps on the Baron's slabs.

Krajicek, however, is not the Tennis Monster. No, Richard Krajicek is not that player. Martin Amis is that player. I am that player. Krajicek may be strong, but I am stronger—in at least two departments. First, my confidence (*so* crucial in sports) belongs to a different league. Krajicek was surprised to win Wimbledon! Yet when my turn comes, I will take my triumph humorlessly in stride. Second, Krajicek keeps getting injured. And I don't.

True, the near-immobilizing back pain I suffer from is probably the result of playing too much tennis. Or any tennis whatever. And both my knees hurt a lot all the time. But I never get *injured.* Of course, I can already hear the doubting Thomas who will soon be telling me that I have left it too late to make a serious bid for the No. 1 spot. Or even for the top ten. I



have nothing to say to this. Because I prefer to do my talking on the tennis court.

In preparation, I am taking the trouble to compile my entry for the ATP Tour "Player Guide." Here's how it's looking:

Birth date: 8/25/49. Height: 5' 6¼". Weight: 150. Plays: Right-handed. Career winnings: A cruise around the British Isles. Career losings: About £200 (gambling).

Career highlights: 1989—Playing in Morocco, took a game off the hotel pro, Kabir, who once warmed up with Yannick Noah. 1991—Beat a sixty-year-old to reach career-best second round of Paddington Sports Club Over 35s. 1993—Beat Zach, David, and Andy on consecutive Sundays at P.S.C. 1995—Partnered by Peter Fleming, caused a publisher to cramp on match point, winning first Pro-Am event. 1996—Took a set off Chris at P.S.C., causing him to break two new racquets. Beat Ray at P.S.C.

GRAND SLAM HISTORY:

	'94	'95	'96
AUS. OPEN	—	—	—
FRENCH OPEN	—	—	—
WIMBLEDON	—	—	—
U.S. OPEN	—	—	

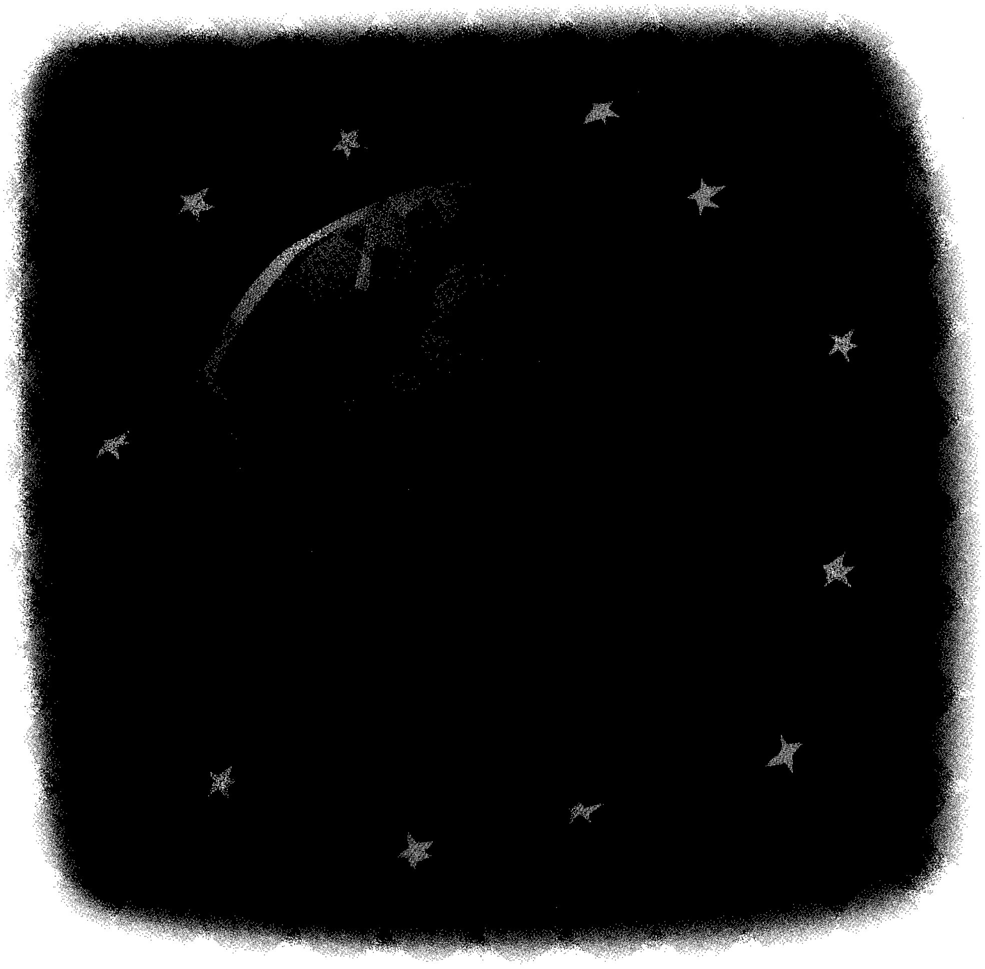
Readers will notice, in that last section, an intriguing gap, which whispers, "The U.S. Open—in '96?" But I skipped the Olympics, and I have pulled out of the Open. My plan is to conserve myself for Wimbledon '97. There is still a weakness in my game—one I am resolved to eliminate.

Frankly, it's my return of serve, which is not as good as Andre Agassi's. I sometimes think that in this department I'm not much better than Jimmy Connors. A serve is by definition a short ball, but my reply still tends to be hurried. I particularly notice this when I face players who are tall—or insufficiently shrunken by age. So I usually settle for a kind of chip.

But there's only one server who really worries me. Not Sampras. Because Sampras is only six feet one. I know he can jump higher than Air Jordan and hasn't missed an overhead in ten years. But I'd precision-lob the clown, or else dink my returns to his feet, making Pete crazy. Becker can expect the same treatment.

At Wimbledon, I will probably be unseeded, and may face quite reasonable players in the early rounds. I can see it now: Toward dusk on the opening day, on Court Thirteen, in poor light. We have reached the inevitable first-set tiebreak. I peer over the net, and focus. Grass is my opponent's best surface, and he's playing out of his skin. Goran Ivanisevic is preparing to serve *with new balls.* And he may just get one or two past me.

Yet Goran's nerve will fail him, as it always does. And my confidence will start to soar. I don't foresee a problem until the fourth round, at which stage I may get taken to four sets by someone like Stich or Kafelnikov. Then Andre in the quarters; then Pete or Boris—whichever—in the semis. By now Baron Bollettieri will be sniffing around my door. He'll be after my big shots: that lob, and the little pat I give the spare ball at the end of a service game. He'll be hoping to reënmonster Krajicek for the final. Well, let them patch him up all they like. I don't want a neo-Boris Becker out there, for our rendezvous on center court. I want Boris Karloff. I wouldn't have it any other way. ♦



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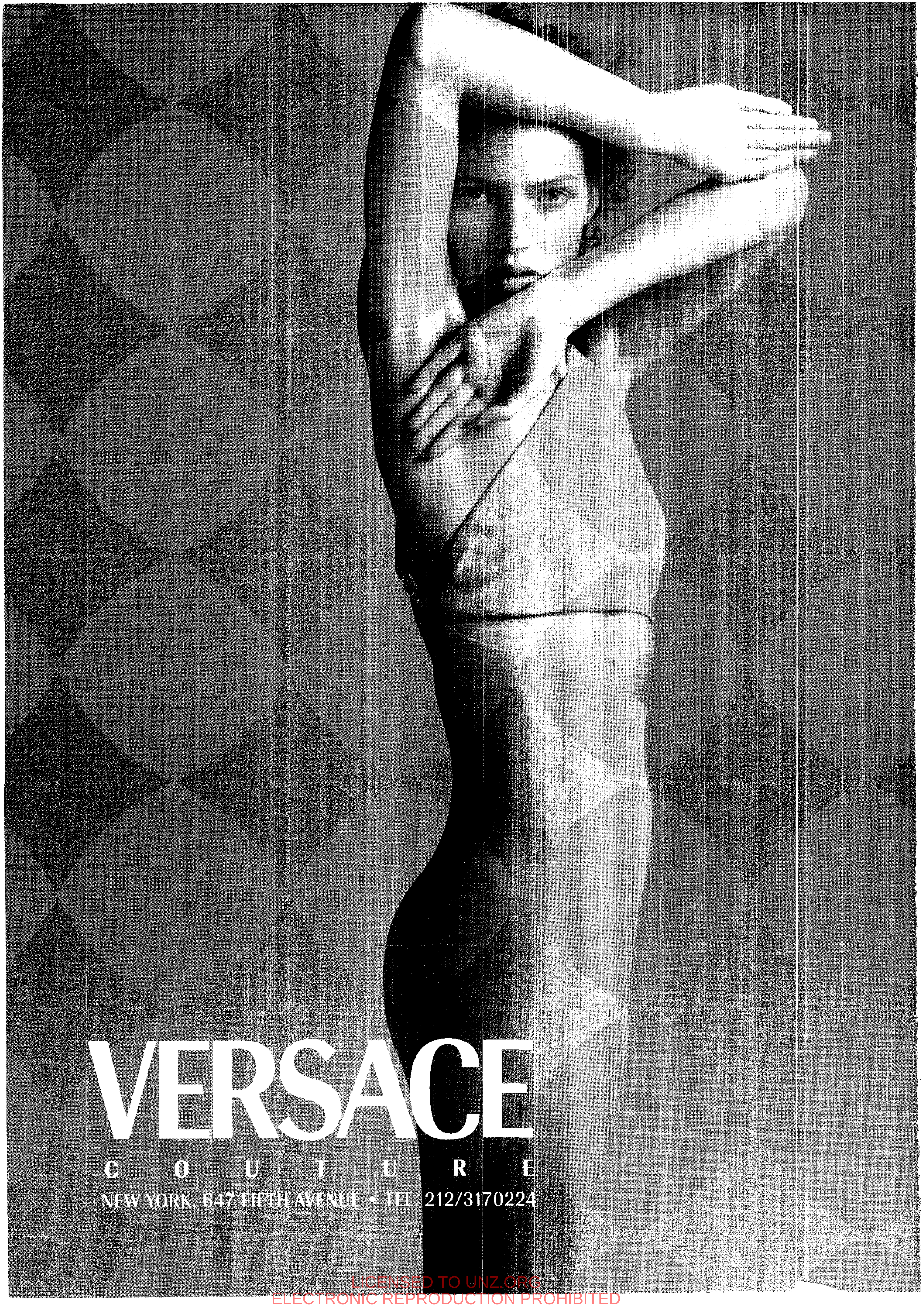

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